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AN  
H I S T O R Y  
OF  
EARLY OPINIONS  
CONCERNING  
J E S U S C H R I S T,

COMPILED FROM  
ORIGINAL WRITERS;  
PROVING THAT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS  
AT FIRST UNITARIAN.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL. D. F. R. S.

AC. IMP. PETROP. R. PARIS. HOLM. TAURIN. AUREL. MED.  
PARIS. CANTAB. AMERIC. ET PHILAD. SOCIUS.

V O L. I.

——— *Antiquam exquirite matrem.*

VIRGIL.

——— *Αγγραφὸς χρῆσασθαι φωνῆς· διὸ σχεδὸν ἠπάσα γέγονε  
συγχυσίς τε καὶ ἀναστασία τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν.*

EUSEBIUS.

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T O

MRS. R A Y N E R,

O F

SUNBURY, in MIDDLESEX.

MADAM,

**Y**OUR known zeal for the cause in the defence of which this work is composed is my motive for prefixing your name to it. It is a great and important question that is now in agitation, and it is but justice that posterity should, if possible, be made acquainted with the names of those zealous advocates of truth, whose

A 2 exertions

iv DEDICATION.

exertions, though not in the character of writers, have yet, in various other ways, contributed to its successful spread. In this honourable class I know of few that are intitled to stand before that of Mrs. Rayner.

Such is our social nature, that those who are actuated by the purest love of truth, and whose views are the most single, *feel*, and therefore, in some degree, *want* the additional motive which arises from the concurrence of others, in a cause in which the world in general is against them. But a very few, united in a love of truth, of the importance of which they are deeply sensible, will easily bear up against any combination. Numbers, power, wealth, long establishment, fashion, interest, and every other advantage on the  
side

## DEDICATION. ✓

side of *error*, inspire no fear or distrust, but rather give courage to the small band that fight under the banners of *truth and right*. The contest itself is glorious, and their confidence of final success makes them easy, and even joyful, under all opposition.

Believing, as I am persuaded that you, Madam, as well as myself, do, that a wise Providence super-intends all events, guiding the thoughts and pursuits of every individual to the most proper object, and in the most proper time, we rejoice in seeing every question of great moment, and especially those relating to *theology*, become the subject of interesting discussion, well knowing that it is a prelude to the enlargement of the minds of men, the detection of error, and the propaga-

tion of truth, with which the well being of mankind, here and hereafter, is always, more or less, connected.

You, Madam, have sufficiently shewn a mind superior to every thing that this world can hold out in opposition to the claims of reason and conscience; and the knowledge that I have of your enlarged views, and your noble intrepidity in following truth wherever you apprehend it to lead you, and in overlooking all obstacles that would oppose *right conduct*, will always, I hope, increase my own zeal and firmness in the same cause. Such examples are ever present to my mind; and it is impossible that they should be contemplated without some beneficial influence.

Society

DEDICATION vii

Society, like yours, and that of our common and excellent friend Mr. Lindsey (without, however, excluding many others who think differently from us with respect to the object of this work, but whose christian spirit I revere, and, I hope, emulate) is one chief source of my happiness here. And I have no greater wish than to rejoin such friends hereafter, and share in their pursuits in a future world, as I have done in the present; not doubting but that we shall find proper objects for the exercise of that ardent love of truth, and that zeal and activity in promoting it (as well as for the principles of piety and benevolence in general) which have been formed here.

Wishing that your sun may set with serenity, in the pleasing prospect of the

successful spread of that truth which it has been your great wish to promote, and of that future happy world, in which truth and virtue will reign triumphant,

I am, with the truest respect,

M A D A M,

Your most obliged

humble Servant,

J. P R I E S T L E Y.

BIRMINGHAM,  
May, 1786.

T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**T**HE *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* I wrote as a sequel to my *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and therefore chiefly for the use of *the unlearned*, who might wish to know in what manner, and from what causes, such doctrines as those of the *trinity*, *atonement*, *original sin*, &c. arose, and got so firm an establishment in the creeds of so many persons professing christianity, with the genuine principles of which they are totally discordant.

That work having engaged me in a controversy with respect to the first article of it, viz. *the History of Opinions concerning Christ*, I have been led to give more parti-



cular attention to the subject; and this has produced the materials for the work which I now present to the public, and especially to *the learned*, to whom it is more particularly addressed; though, I hope, that the greatest part of it will be sufficiently intelligible to readers of good sense, who may not have had the advantage of a scholastic education.

In composing this work, I can truly say that I have spared neither time, labour, nor expence. When I formed the design of it, I was determined to do it from *original writers*, without even looking into any modern author whatever. I therefore perused all the books of which a catalogue will be given at the close of the work (which are all that I could purchase, or conveniently borrow) with as much care as I thought the nature of each required, having only one object in view; and I did not knowingly overlook any passage that promised to throw light upon the subject.

Having

Having collected and arranged these materials, furnished by those original authors, I applied myself to the reading of all the modern writers of any reputation for learning in ecclesiastical history, whether their opinions were the same with mine, or not. But the addition that I made to my own collection of authorities by this means amounted to very little, not more than about twenty or thirty, and those, in general, of no great consequence. What more I could have done I cannot tell. By delaying the publication a year or two longer, and revising the work again and again, I might, no doubt, have made it more complete, especially as a *composition*. But with me this is no object at all; and the improvement that I might have made in the work in other respects would not, I think, have been very material.

With great tranquility and satisfaction, therefore, I now commit this History to my friends, and to my enemies; sufficiently aware that it is not without its defects to  
exercise

exercife the candour of the former, and the captiousness of the latter. But no work of this extent, and of this nature, can be expected to be perfect. I have myself discovered great mistakes and oversights in those who have gone before me; and notwithstanding all my care, I shall not be surprized if those who come after me, especially if they walk over the same ground more leisurely than I have done, should find some things to correct in me. To make this as easy as possible, I have printed my authorities at full length. But I am confident, that all my oversights will not invalidate any position of consequence in the whole work; and this is all that the real *inquirer after truth* will be solicitous about.

On no former occasion have I declined, but on the contrary I have rather courted, and provoked, opposition, because I am sensible it is the only method of discovering truth; and I am far from wishing that this work may escape the most rigorous examination. It will enable me to correct  
any

any future editions of it, and make it more perfect than it is possible for me to make it at present. I hope also that the controversy will be continued by men of learning, though I may now think myself excused from taking any part in it. But with respect to this, I do not pretend to have any fixed determination. Every writer who wishes not to mislead the public, is answerable for what he lays before them. At their bar he is always standing, and should hold himself ready to answer any important question, when it is properly put to him.

This I shall have a good opportunity of doing in the *Theological Repository*, which I have revived, and which is published occasionally; and, to repeat what I said on a former occasion, “ If any person will give  
 “ his name, and propose any difficulty  
 “ whatever relating to the subject of this  
 “ work, so that I shall see reason to think  
 “ that it proceeds from a love of truth, I  
 “ here promise that I will speak fully to  
 “ it, and I shall be as explicit as I possibly  
 “ can.”

“can.” Notwithstanding the pains that have been taken to exhibit me to the public as an unfair and disingenuous writer, I trust that with many, at least, I have some character to lose; or if so much has been taken away that I have but little left, it may be presumed that I shall be the more careful of it on that account.

It was my earnest wish to have had the advantage of a public discussion of the subject of this work by a *learned Arian* before I had proceeded to the composition of it. I solicited for such an opponent both publicly and privately, but without success; which I think is much to be regretted. In lieu of this, I have collected the ideas of the Arians in a more private way, and have myself endeavoured to suggest all that I possibly could in support of their opinion. It will be seen that I have given particular attention to their doctrine through the whole course of the work; and I must say that, I find no evidence of its existence before the time of Arius. If I have proved this,

this, the hypothesis must be abandoned. For no person can long satisfy himself with saying, it is sufficient for him, if he find his opinion in the scriptures, and that he will not trouble himself about that of others, however near to the time of the apostles. For it will be an unanswerable argument, *a priori*, against any particular doctrine being contained in the scriptures, that it was never understood to be so by those persons for whose immediate use the scriptures were written, and who must have been much better qualified to understand them, in that respect at least, than we can pretend to be at this day.

My Arian friends, I am well aware, will think that, in this, as well as in a great part of the work, I bear peculiarly hard upon them; and I frankly acknowledge it. I think theirs to be an hypothesis equally destitute of support in the scriptures, in reason, and in history. There is, I even think, less colour for it than for the trinitarian doctrine as it stood before the council

S
 cil of Nice. For afterwards it became a perfect *contradiction*, undeserving of any discussion.

—
 It would give me much pain to offend my Arian friends, as I fear I shall do in this work ; because for many of them I have a great esteem, for some of them as great as I have for any living characters whatever. But I flatter myself that, as they know me well, they will be satisfied, that all I have advanced arises from the fulness of my persuasion with respect to the fallaciousness of their principles, and my earnest desire to recommend to them a system better founded than their own.

S
 They will be more particularly offended at my not allowing them the title of *unitarians*. But for this I have given my reasons ; and I respect them as *good men*, and *good christians*, which is of infinitely more value. Besides, the title of *unitarians* is that which had always been given to those who have of late been called Socinians in  
this

this country, till Arianism was introduced by Mr. Whiston, Dr. Clarke, and Mr. Pierce, at a time when the old unitarians, such as were Mr. Biddle, and Mr. Firmin (those most respectable of men) were almost extinct. We therefore only reclaim an old possession, and by this means get quit of a denomination from a particular person, which is never a pleasing circumstance. But let my *reasons* be considered, and by them I am willing to stand or fall.

There is one particular subject on which I have much enlarged in this treatise, and about which I had no intention to write at all, when I began to collect materials for it. It is the *miraculous conception* of Jesus, concerning which I had not at that time entertained any doubt; though I well knew that several very eminent and learned christians, of ancient and modern times, had disbelieved it. The case was that, in perusing the early christian writers, with a view to collect all *opinions concerning Christ*, I found so much on this subject, that I

b

could



could not help giving particular attention to it; and it being impossible not to be struck with the absurdity of their *reasoning* about it, I was by degrees led to think whether any thing better could be said in proof of the *fact*; and at length my collections and speculations, grew to the size that is now before the reader.

It has been my business to collect and digest *facts* and *opinions*, and it will be his to form a *judgment* concerning them. What I myself think of them he will easily perceive, because I have frankly acknowledged it; but that ought not to bias him. I rather wish that it may operate to awaken his suspicions, and lead him to examine what I have advanced with the greatest rigour. To assist his judgment, I have kept nothing back that has occurred to myself, or that has been suggested by others; and in order to collect opinions with more ease, I first published this article in the *Theological Repository*, as I also did that relating to the intricate business of Platonism.

I am

I am well aware that what I have advanced on this subject will give my enemies fresh occasion for raising a clamour against me. But they cannot, with this new provocation, add to what they have already said of me. If they tax me with mean artifice, base dissimulation, gross ignorance, and the most wilful perversion of the authors I quote, there will be nothing *new* in it. My ears are now accustomed to these charges, and callous to them; so that I receive them as things of course. And though I, no doubt, wish to stand better with my readers, and to pass for a fair and earnest, though fearless enquirer after truth (because I believe myself to be so) it is, from habit, no great pain to me to be considered in a different light. To my enemies, therefore, who have already calumniated me so grossly, I make no apology, and of them I ask no favour. I should sue in vain if I did.

The only article for which I acknowledge myself an *advocate* in this work, is

the truth and antiquity of the proper unitarian doctrine, in opposition to the trinitarian and Arian hypotheses. And even with respect to this, I am, as I have observed before, by no means sanguine in my expectations from the effect of the most forcible arguments; the minds of many being at present greatly indisposed to receive the opinion that I contend for, in consequence of strong early prejudices in favour of a different one; prejudices which have been confirmed by much reading, thinking, and conversation. Least of all can I expect to make any impression on those who are advanced in life. My chief expectations are from the *young*, and from *posterity*. And it is happy for the cause of truth, as well as other valuable purposes, that man is mortal; and that while the species continues, the individuals go off the stage. For otherwise the whole species would soon arrive at its *maximum* in all improvements, as individuals now do.

In this work I find myself in a great measure, as I was well apprized, upon new ground.

ground. At least, I see reason to think that it has never been sufficiently examined by any person who has had the same general views of things that I have. Dr. Lardner, who was as much conversant with the early christian writers as perhaps any man whatever, and whose sentiments on the subject of this controversy, were the same with mine, yet had another object in reading them.

Przypcovius wrote upon this subject, but what he has advanced is very short, and very imperfect. What Zuicker did, I can only learn from Bishop Bull, who had not seen all his works; but I suspect that he was not master of all the evidence that may be procured from a careful reading of ancient writers, and a comparison of the several circumstances to be collected from them\*.

\* Since this was written, I have had a particular account of this work from a learned foreign correspondent, and it has not contributed to heighten my regret at not having been able to procure it. It does not appear to

And it certainly requires no small degree of patience, as well as judgment and sagacity, to trace the real state of the unitarian christians in early times, from the writings of their enemies only. For all their own writings are either grossly interpolated, or have perished, except the *Clementines*. But a candid reader will make allowance for this great disadvantage, which, as the historian of the unitarians, I have laboured under. Who is there that will pretend to collect from the Roman historians only, a complete account of the affairs of the Carthaginians, the maxims of their conduct, and the motives of their public transactions, especially in relation to those things with respect to which we know that they mutually accused each other.

As to the learned christians of the last age (excepting the Athanasians) they were

me, that either Mr. Zuicker, or any of the Polish Socinians, were sufficiently acquainted with christian antiquity.

almost

almost all Arians, such as Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Pierce, &c. In their time, it was a great thing to prove that the opinion of the perfect equality of the Son to the Father, in all divine perfections, was not the doctrine of the early ages. Those writers could not, indeed, help perceiving traces of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ; but taking it for granted that this was an opinion concerning him as much too low, as that of the Athanasians was too high, and there being no distinguished advocates for the proper unitarian doctrine in their time, they did not give sufficient attention to the circumstances relating to it. These circumstances it has been my business to collect, and to compare; and, situated as I am, it may be depended upon, that I have done it with all the circumspection of which I am capable.

My authorities from original writers will perhaps be thought too full; but I imagined that an error on this side would be

the better extreme of the two. In some few places, the same references have been repeated, and in p. 147, through inadvertence unnecessarily, as they occur again, p. 169, where they were more wanted. But I do not think that besides these, there are more than three or four repetitions of references in the whole work. It will frequently be found that more is contained in the reference than in the text; but this will gratify some persons who may wish to see in what manner christian writers of so early a period expressed themselves on the subjects of this work, especially as but few of my readers will have an opportunity of seeing many of the originals. If some of my quotations should excite a smile, I hope they will not be displeas'd. In whatever light such passages may appear to them, they may be assured that they were written with great seriousness; and this will contribute to their forming a more perfect idea of the character and manner of that class of writers.

My

My classical reader must not expect the most correct style in the authors with whom I shall bring him acquainted, especially some of those who wrote in Latin; and the Greek writers abound with passages which the ablest critics have not been able to restore. In these cases I have generally given that reading which the editors have preferred, and sometimes that which I have thought the sense absolutely required. However the meaning (which is all that I have to do with) is generally sufficiently obvious, when the grammatical construction of the words is the most difficult.

It is sometimes of great consequence to distinguish between the *genuine* and the *spurious* works of the Fathers. With respect to this, I have mostly followed Cave. But, in general, it is sufficient for my purpose, if the books I quote were written within the period to which the supposed writers belong; because all that I am concerned with, is the existence of any particular opinion in the age to which



I refer it ; so that, in many cases, a mistake of this kind will not affect my object. Some will think that I have done wrong in ascribing the *Philosophumena* to Origen ; and in quoting the treatise against Noetus, as if it was the work of Hippolytus, though in this Beaufobre has done the same before me. But the former I really think bears the marks of an age as early as that of Origen, and the latter I have not quoted for any purpose in which either the writer, or the exact date of the work, is concerned.

I must also apprise my readers of another circumstance relating to my references, which is, that they will often find evidence as strongly in favour of any particular proposition under some other head, as that which they will see in the place where they will most naturally look for it. But having, as I imagined, a superfluity of evidence for every thing that I have advanced, rather than tire the reader with a multiplicity of quotations of one kind, in any one place, I contrived to introduce

duce several of them under other heads, to which they likewise bore a relation. As to those persons, therefore, who are not satisfied with what I judge to be sufficient evidence, on any article, I would wish them to suspend their judgment till they have perused the whole work; as it is very possible that they may be more struck with those authorities which they will find in some other place.

To give as much *perspicuity* as I possibly could to so complex a subject, I have given particular attention to the *arrangement* of this work. For this purpose I have made many divisions and sub-divisions in it. On this account it was not easy to prevent the occurrence of the same considerations in different places, and I took the less care to avoid it, because the views of things that are repeated are of particular importance, though never that I know of exhibited before, so that I wished to impress them on the mind of the reader.

Before

Before I close this preface, I must apprise my readers, that I have introduced into this work, every thing of which I could make any use from any of the publications in my late controversy, as I there informed them that I should do. They have, therefore, before them all that I have been able to bring together, as materials from which to form their own judgment. And having done my duty with respect to *them*, let them do the same with respect to *truth*, and to *themselves*.

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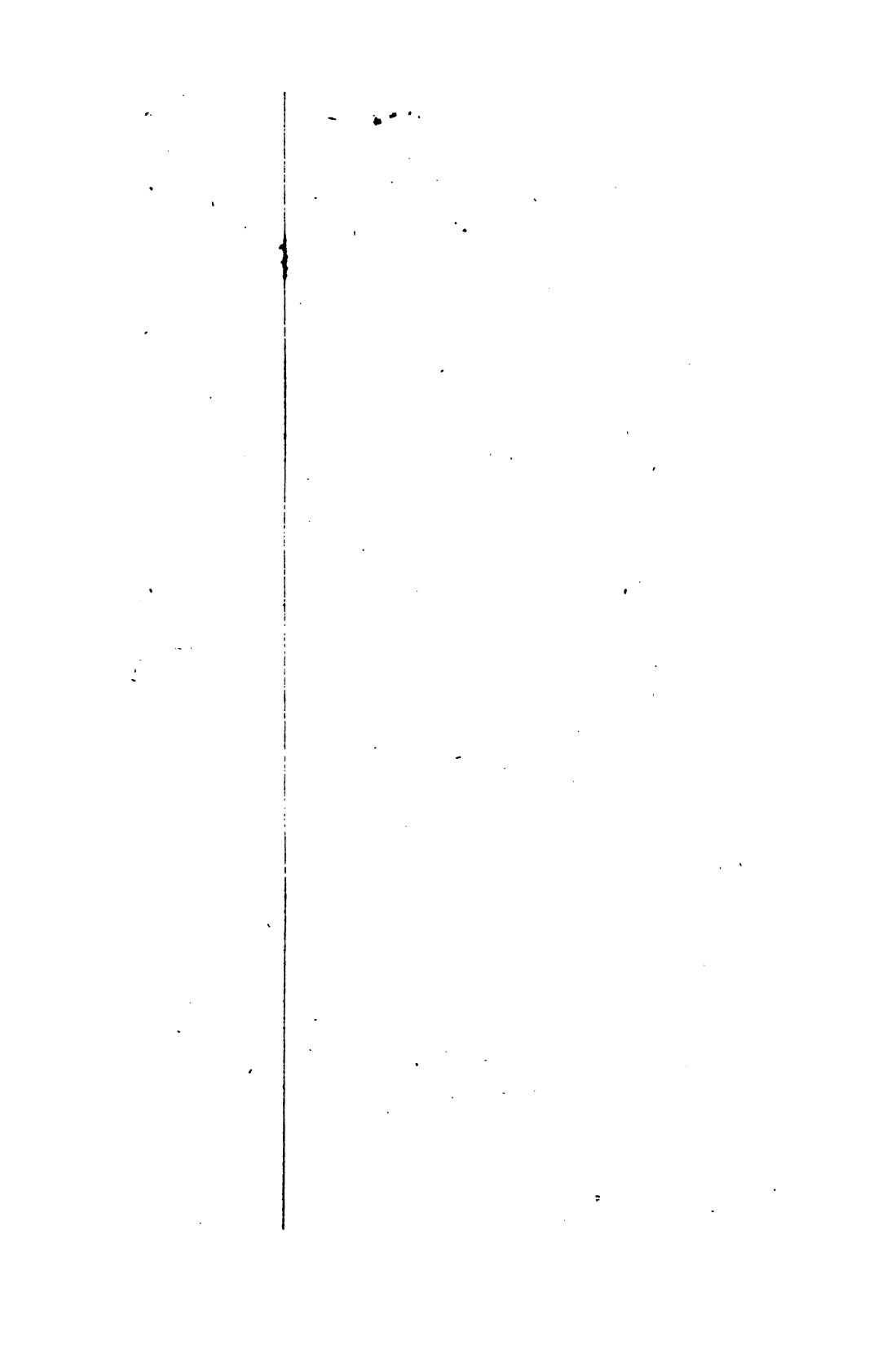
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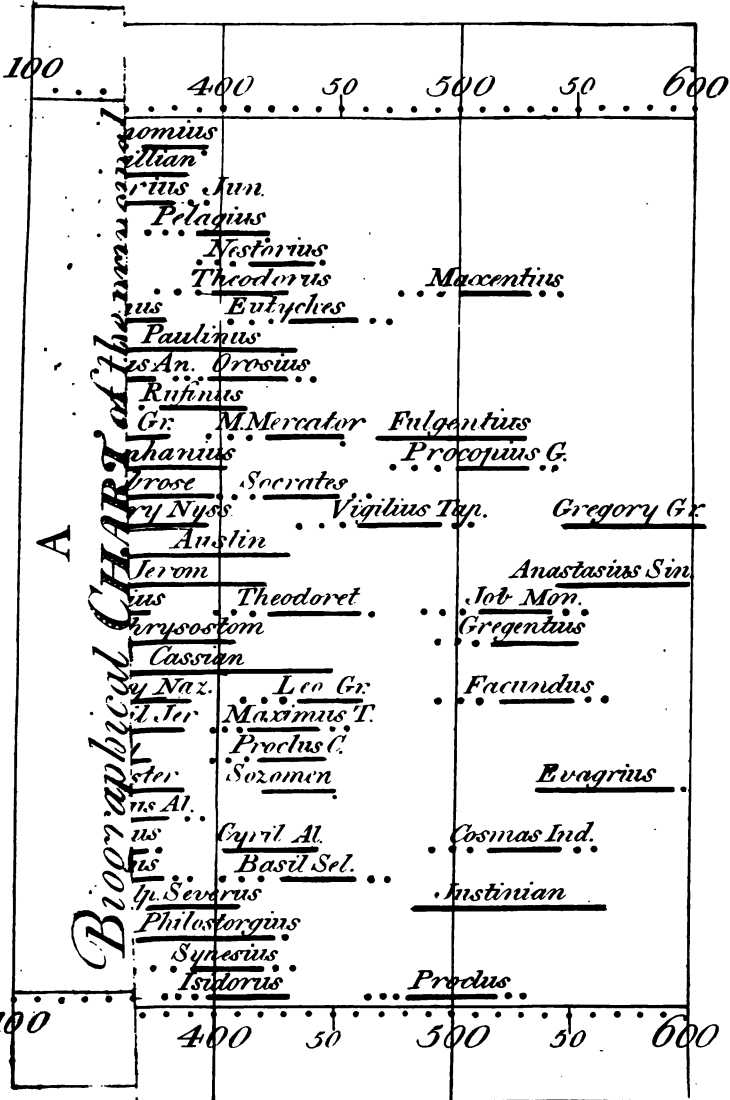
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T H E  
I N T R O D U C T I O N :

C O N T A I N I N G

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS  
AGAINST THE DOCTRINES OF THE  
DIVINITY AND PRE-EXISTENCE OF  
CHRIST.

---

S E C T I O N I.

*Of the Argument against the Doctrines of the  
Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, from  
the general Tenor of the Scriptures.*

**W**HEN we inquire into the doctrine of any book, or set of books, concerning any subject, and particular passages are alledged in favour of different opinions, we should chiefly consider what is the *general tenor* of the whole work with respect to it, or what impression the first careful perusal of it would probably make upon an impartial reader. This is not difficult to

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distinguish.

distinguish. For, in works of any considerable extent, the leading doctrines, and particularly those which it was the particular design of the writers to inculcate, will occur frequently, and they will often be illustrated, and enforced by a variety of arguments; so that those things only will be dubious, the mention of which occurs but seldom, or which are not expressly *asserted*, but only *inferred* from particular expressions. But by attending only to some particular expressions, and neglecting, or wholly overlooking others, the strangest and most unaccountable opinions may be ascribed to writers. Nay, without considering the relation that particular expressions bear to others, and to the tenor of the whole work, sentiments the very reverse of those which the writers meant to inculcate may be ascribed to them.

If, from previous instruction, and early habits, we find it difficult to ascertain the real meaning and design of a writer in this way, we shall find much assistance by considering in what sense he was actually understood by those persons for whose use he wrote,

wrote, and who must have been the best acquainted with his language. For if a writer expresses himself with tolerable clearness, and really means to be understood (being well acquainted with the persons into whose hands his work will come) he cannot fail to be so, with respect to every thing of consequence.

If we wish to know whether Homer, for instance, entertained the opinion of there being *more Gods than one*, we need only read his poems, and no doubt will remain concerning it; the mention of Jupiter, Juno, Mars, &c. and the part they took in the siege of Troy, occurring perpetually. If any difficulty should still remain, we must then consider what were the opinions, and what was the practice of the Greeks, who read and approved his poems. In this way we shall soon satisfy ourselves, that Homer held the doctrine of *a multiplicity of Gods*, and that he, and the Greeks in general, were what we call *idolaters*.

In like manner, an impartial person may easily satisfy himself, that the writers of the books of scripture held the doctrine of

*one God*, and that they were understood to do so by those persons for whose use the books were written.

If we consult Moses's account of the creation, we shall find that he makes no mention of more than one God, who made the heavens and the earth, who supplied the earth with plants and animals, and who also formed man. The plural number, indeed, is made use of when God is represented as saying, Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man*; but that this is mere *phraseology*, is evident from its being said immediately after, in the singular number, v. 27. *God created man in his own image*, so that the creator was still *one being*. Also, in the account of the building of the tower of Babel, we read, Gen. xi. 7, that *God said let us go down, and there confound their language*; but we find, in the very next verse; that it was one being only who actually effected this.

In all the intercourse of God with Adam, Noah, and the other patriarchs, no mention is made of more than one being who addressed them under that character. The  
name

*Divinity or Pre-existence of Christ.* 5

name by which he is distinguished is sometimes *Jehovah*, and at other times *the God of Abraham*, &c. but no doubt can be entertained, that this was the same being who is first mentioned under the general title of *God*, and to whom the making of the heavens and the earth is ascribed.

Frequent mention is made in the scriptures of *angels*, who sometimes speak in the name of God, but then they are always represented as the creatures and the servants of God. It is even doubtful whether, in some cases, what are called angels, and had the form of men, who even walked, and spake, &c. like men, were any thing more than temporary appearances, and no permanent beings; the mere organs of the deity, used for the purpose of making himself known and understood by his creatures. On no account, however, can these angels be considered as *Gods*, rivals of the supreme being, or of the same rank with him.

The most express declarations concerning the unity of God, and of the importance of the belief of it, are frequent in the Old Testament. The first commandment is,

Ex. xx. 3. *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* This is repeated in the most emphatical manner, Deut. vi. 4. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord.* I have no occasion to repeat what occurs on this subject in the later prophets: It appears, indeed, to have been the great object of the religion of the Jews, and of their being distinguished from other nations by the superior presence and superintendence of God, to preserve among them the knowledge of the divine unity, while the rest of the world were falling into idolatry. And by means of this nation, and the discipline which it underwent, that great doctrine was effectually preserved among men, and continues to be so to this day.

Had there been any distinction of *persons* in the divine nature, such as the doctrine of the trinity supposes, it is at least so *like* an infringement of the fundamental doctrine of the Jewish religion, that it certainly required to be explained, and the obvious inference from it to be guarded against. Had the eternal *Father* had a *Son*, and also a *Spirit*, each of them equal in power and

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glory

glory to himself, though there should have been a sense in which each of them was truly God, and yet there was, properly speaking, only *one God*; at least the more obvious inference would have been, that if each of the three persons was properly God, they would all together make *three Gods*. Since, therefore, nothing of this kind is said in the Old Testament, as the objection is never made, nor answered, it is evident that the idea had not then occurred. No expression, or appearance, had at that time even suggested the difficulty.

If we guide ourselves by the sense in which the Jews understood their own sacred books, we cannot but conclude that they contained no such doctrine as that of the christian trinity. For it does not appear that any Jew, of ancient or modern times, ever deduced such a doctrine from them. The Jews always interpreted their scriptures as teaching that God is simply *one*, without distinction of persons, and that the same being who made the world, did also speak to the patriarchs and the prophets,



without the intervention of any other beings besides angels.

Christians have imagined that the Messiah was to be the second person in the divine trinity; but the Jews themselves, great as were their expectations from the Messiah, never supposed any such thing. And if we consider the prophecies concerning this great personage, we shall be satisfied that they could not possibly have led them to expect any other than *a man* in that character. The Messiah is supposed to be announced to our first parents under the title of *the seed of the woman*, Gen. iii. 15. But the phrase *born of woman*, which is of the same import, is always in scripture synonymous to *man*. Job says, ch. xiv. 1. *Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble*; and again, ch. 25. 4. *How can he be clean that is born of a woman?*

God promised to Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. This, if it relate to the Messiah at all, can give us no other idea than that *one of his seed or posterity, should be*

*Divinity or Pre-existence of Christ.* 9

be the means of conferring great blessings on mankind. What else, also, could be suggested by the description which Moses is supposed to give of the Messiah, when he said, Deut xviii. 18. *I will raise them up a prophet, from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him?* Here is nothing like a second person in the trinity, a person equal to the Father, but a mere prophet, delivering in the name of God, whatever he is ordered so to do. By Isaiah, who writes more distinctly concerning the Messiah than any of the preceding prophets, his sufferings and death are mentioned, ch. liii. Daniel also speaks of him as to *be cut off*, ch. ix. 26. But surely these are characters of a *man*, and not those of a *God*. Accordingly, it appears, in the history of our Saviour, that the Jews of his time expected that their Messiah would be a *prince* and a *conqueror*, like David, from whom he was to be descended.

In the New Testament we find the same doctrine concerning God that we do in the Old.

Old. To the scribe who inquired which was the first and the greatest commandment, our Saviour answered, Mark xii. 29. *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, &c.* and the scribe answered to him, *Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but he, &c.*

Christ himself always prayed to this one God, as his God and Father. He always spake of himself as receiving his doctrine and his power from him, and again and again disclaimed having any power of his own, John v. 19. *Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself.* Ch. xiv. 10. *The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works.* Ch. xx. 17. *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and unto my God and your God.* It cannot, surely, be God that uses such language as this.

The apostles, to the latest period of their writings, speak the same language; representing the Father as the only true God,  
and

*Divinity or Pre-existence of Christ.* 11

and Christ as a man, the servant of God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him all the power of which he is possessed, as a reward of his obedience, Act ii. 22. Peter says, *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, &c. whom God has raised up.* Paul also says, 1 Tim. ii. v. *There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* Heb. ii. 9. *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, i. e. who was a man, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, &c. For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Such, I will venture to say, is the general tenor of the scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament; and the passages that even *seem* to speak, or that can by any forced construction be *made* to speak, a different language, are comparatively few. It will also be seen, in the course of this history,

history, that the common people, for whose use the books of the New Testament were written, saw nothing in them of the doctrines of the pre-existence or divinity of Christ, which many persons of this day are so confident that they see in them. For the right understanding of these particular texts, I must refer my readers to the writings of Mr. Lindsey, and to a small tract which I published, entitled, *Illustrations of particular passages of Scripture.*

Why was not the doctrine of the *trinity* taught as explicitly, and in as definite a manner, in the New Testament at least, as the doctrine of the *divine unity* is taught in both the Old and New Testaments, if it be a truth? And why is the doctrine of the unity always delivered in so unguarded a manner, and without any *exception* made in favour of a trinity, to prevent any mistake with respect to it, as is always now done in our orthodox catechisms, creeds, and discourses on the subject? For it cannot be denied but that the doctrine of the *trinity* looks so *like* an infringement of that of the *unity* (on which the greatest possible stress

stress is always laid in the scriptures) that it required to be at least hinted at, if not well defined and explained, when the divine unity was spoken of. Divines are content, however, to build so strange and inexplicable a doctrine as that of the trinity upon mere inferences from casual expressions, and cannot pretend to one clear, express, and unequivocal lesson on the subject.

There are many, very many, passages of scripture, which inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity in the clearest and strongest manner. Let one such passage be produced in favour of the trinity. And why should we believe things so mysterious without the clearest and most express evidence.

There is also another consideration which I would recommend to those who maintain that Christ is either God, or the maker of the world under God. It is this: The manner in which our Lord speaks of himself, and of the power by which he worked miracles, is inconsistent, according to the common construction of language,  
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with the idea of his being possessed of any proper power of his own, more than other men have.

If Christ was the maker of the world, and if, in the creation of it, he exerted no power but what properly *belonged to himself*, and what was as much *his own*, as the power of *speaking*, or *walking* belongs to man (though depending ultimately upon that supreme power, in which we all live, and move, and have our being) he could not, with any propriety, and without knowing that he must be misunderstood, have said that *of himself he could do nothing*, that *the words which he spake were not his own*, and that *the Father within him did the works*. For if any ordinary man, doing what other men usually do, should apply this language to himself, and say that it was not *he* that spake or acted, but *God* who spake and acted by him, and that otherwise he was not capable of so speaking or acting at all, we should not scruple to say that his language was either sophistical, or else downright false or blasphemous.

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If this conclusion would be just upon the supposition that Christ had created all things, and worked miracles by a power properly his own, though derived ultimately from God, much more force has it on the supposition of his working miracles by a power not derived from any being whatever, but as much originally *in himself*, as the power of the Father.

It would also be a shocking abuse of language, and would warrant any kind of deception and imposition, if Christ could be supposed to say, that *his Father was greater than he*, and yet secretly mean his *human nature only*, while his divine nature was at the same time, fully equal to that of the Father. On the same principle a man might say, that Christ never suffered, that he never died, or rose again from the dead, meaning his *divine nature only*, and not his human. Indeed, there is no use in language, nor any guard against deception, if such liberties as these are to be allowed.

There is something inexplicable, and not to be accounted for in the conduct of several



ral of the evangelists, indeed that of all of them, on the supposition of their having held any such doctrines as those of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ. Each of the gospels was certainly intended to be a sufficient instruction in the fundamental principles of christianity. But there is nothing that can be called an account of the divine, or even the super-angelic nature of Christ in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, or Luke; and allowing that there may be some colour for it in the introduction to the gospel of John, it is remarkable that there are many passages in his gospel which are decisively in favour of his simple humanity.

Now these evangelists could not imagine that either the Jews or the Gentiles, for whose use their gospels were written, would not stand in need of information on a subject of so much importance; which was so very remote from the apprehensions of them both, and which would at the same time have so effectually covered the reproach of the cross, which was continually objected to the christians of that age. If  
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the doctrines of the divinity, or pre-existence of Christ be true, they are no doubt in the highest degree important and interesting. Since, therefore, these evangelists give no certain and distinct account of them, and say nothing at all of their *importance*, it may be safely inferred that they were unknown to them.

I would farther recommend it to the consideration of my readers, how the apostles could continue to call Christ *a man*, as they always do, both in the book of Acts, and in their epistles, after they had discovered him to be either God, or a super-angelic being, the maker of the world under God. After this, it must have been highly degrading, unnatural, and improper, notwithstanding his appearance in *human form*. Custom will reconcile us to strange conceptions of things, and very uncouth modes of speech; but let us take up the matter *ab initio*, and put ourselves in the place of the apostles and first disciples of Christ.

They certainly saw and conversed with him at first on the supposition of his being a man as much as themselves. Of this there

can be no doubt. Their surprize, therefore, upon being informed that he was not a man, but really God, or even the maker of the world under God, would be just as great as ours would now be on discovering that any of our acquaintance, or at least a very good man and a prophet, was in reality God, or the maker of the world. Let us consider then, how we should feel, how we should behave towards such a person, and how we should speak of him afterwards. No one, I am confident, would ever call any person *a man*, after he was convinced he was either *God*, or an angel. He would always speak of him in a manner suitable to his proper rank.

Suppose that any two men of our acquaintance, should appear, on examination, to be the angels Michael and Gabriel; should we ever after this call them *men*? Certainly not. We should naturally say to our friends "those two persons whom we took to be men, are not men, but angels in disguise." This language would be natural. Had Christ, therefore, been any thing more than man before he came into the

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the world, and especially had he been either God, or the maker of the world, he never could have been, or have been considered as being, a man, while he was in it; for he could not divest himself of his superior and proper nature. However *disguised*, he would always in fact have been whatever he had been before, and would have been so *filed* by all who truly knew him.

Least of all would Christ have been considered as a man in *reasoning*, and *argumentation*, though his external appearance should have so far put men off their guard, as to have led them to give him that appellation. Had the apostle Paul considered Christ as being any thing more than a man, with respect to his *nature*, he could never have urged with the least propriety or effect, that, *as by man came death, so by man came also the resurrection of the dead*. For it might have been unanswerably replied, This is not the case; for indeed, *by man* comes death, but not by man, but by *God*, or the *creator of man*, under God, comes the resurrection of the dead.

It must strike every person who gives the least attention to the phraseology of the New Testament, that the terms *Christ* and *God*, are perpetually used in contradistinction to each other, as much as *God* and *man*; and if we attend ever so little to the theory of language, and the natural use of words, we shall be satisfied that this would not have been the case, if the former could have been predicated of the latter, that is, if Christ had been God.

We say *the prince and the king*, because the prince is not a king. If he had, we should have had recourse to some other distinction, as that of *greater and less, senior and junior, father and son, &c.* When therefore the apostle Paul said, that the church at Corinth was *Christ's*, and that *Christ was God's* (and that manner of distinguishing them is perpetual in the New Testament) it is evident, that he could have no idea of Christ being *God*, in any proper sense of the word.

In like manner, Clemens Romanus, calling *Christ the sceptre of the Majesty of God*,  
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sufficiently

sufficiently proves that, in his idea, the *sceptre* was one thing, and the God whose sceptre it was, another. This, I say, must have been the case when this language was first adopted, though when principles are once formed, we see, by a variety of experience, that any language may be accommodated to them. But an attention to this circumstance will, I doubt not, contribute, with persons of real discernment, to bring us back to the original use of the words, and to the ideas originally annexed to them. I am persuaded that even now, the constant use of these terms *Christ* and *God*, as opposed to each other, has a great effect in preventing those of the common people who read the New Testament more than books of controversy, from being habitually and practically trinitarians. There will, by this means, be a much greater difference between *God* and *Christ* in their *minds*, than they find in their *creeds*.

All these things duly considered, viz. the frequent and earnest inculcating of the doctrine of the divine *unity*, without any limitation, exception, or explanation, by way

of saying to the doctrine of the *trinity*; the manner in which Christ always spake of himself, and that in which the apostles and evangelists spake of him; the conduct of the three former evangelists, in saying nothing that can be construed into a declaration of his divinity or pre-existence; and the term *God* being always used in contradistinction to *Christ*, no reasonable doubt can remain of the *general tenor of Scripture* being in favour of the doctrine of the *divine unity*, in opposition to that of the *trinity*, and even to that of the *pre-existence*, as well as the *divinity of Christ*,

## SECTION

SECTION II.

*An Argument for the late Origin of the Doctrines of the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, from the Difficulty of tracing the Time in which they were first divulged,*

HAVING shewn that the general tenor of the scriptures, and several considerations obviously deducible from them are highly unfavourable to the doctrine of the trinity, or to those of *the divinity or pre-existence of Christ*, I shall proceed to urge another consideration, which has been little attended to, but which seems to conclude very strongly against either of these doctrines having been known in the time of the apostles, and therefore against their being the doctrine of the scriptures.

As the Jews expected that their Messiah would be a *mere man*, and even be born as other men are, the doctrine of his having had any existence, or sphere of action, before he came into the world (as that of his



having been the maker of the world, the giver of the law, and the medium of all the divine communications to the patriarchs, and especially the doctrine of his being equal to God the Father himself) must have been quite *new* and *extraordinary* doctrines; and, therefore, must have been received as such, whenever they were first divulged. Like all other new and extraordinary doctrines, they must have been first heard with great *surprise*, and they would probably be received with some *doubt* and *hesitation*. The preaching of such doctrines could not but excite much *speculation* and *debate*, and they would certainly be much exclaimed against, and would be urged as a most serious objection to christianity, by those who did not become christians. These have always been the consequences of the promulgation of new and extraordinary opinions, the minds of men not having been previously prepared to receive them. Let us now see whether we can perceive any of these natural marks of the teaching of doctrines so new and extraordinary within the compass of the gospel history.

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It cannot be said that John the Baptist preached any such doctrine; and when the apostles first attached themselves to Jesus, it is evident they only considered him as being such a Messiah as the rest of the Jews expected; viz. a man, and a king. When Nathanael was introduced to him it was evidently in that light, John i. 45. *Philip findeth Nathanael and saith unto him, we have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.* He had then, we may suppose, no knowledge of the miraculous conception.

That Jesus was even the *Messiah*, was divulged with the greatest caution, both to the apostles and to the body of the Jews. For a long time our Lord said nothing explicit on this subject, but left his disciples, as well as the Jews at large, to judge of him from what they saw. In this manner only, he replied to the messengers that John the Baptist sent to him.

If the high-priest expressed his horror, by rending his cloaths, on Jesus avowing himself to be the Messiah, what would he have

have done if he had heard or suspected, that he had made any higher pretensions? And if he had made them, they must have transpired. When the people in general saw his miraculous works, they only wondered that God should have given such power unto a man. Matt. ix. 8. *When the multitude saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, who had given such power unto men; and yet this was on the occasion of his pronouncing the cure of a paralytic person, by saying, Thy sins be forgiven thee,* which the Pharisees thought to be a blasphemous presumption.

At the time that Herod heard of him, it was conjectured by some that he was *Elias*, by others, that he was *the prophet*, and by some that he was John risen from the dead; but none of them imagined that he was either the most high God himself, or the maker of the world under God. It was not so much as supposed by any person that Jesus performed his mighty works by any power of *his own*; so far were they from suspecting that he was the God who had spoken to them by Moses, as many now suppose him to have been.

If he was known to be a God at all before his death, it could only have been revealed to his disciples, perhaps the apostles, or only his chief confidants among them, Peter, James, and John, suppose on the mount of transfiguration, though nothing is said concerning it in the history of that transaction. Certainly what they saw in the garden of Gethsemane could not have led them to suspect any such thing. But if it had ever been known to Peter, can we suppose that he could have denied him as he did? Besides, as our Lord told the apostles that there were many things which he could not inform them of before his death, and that they should know afterwards; this was a thing so very wonderful and unsuspected, that if any articles of information were kept from them at that time, this must certainly have been one of them.

If it be supposed that Thomas was acquainted with this most extraordinary part of his master's character, which led him to cry, *My Lord and my God*, when he was convinced of his resurrection, as he was not one of the *three* who had been entrusted  
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with any *secrets*, it must have been known to all the *twelve*, and to Judas Iscariot among the rest. And suppose him to have known, and to have believed, that Jesus was his *God* and *maker*, was it possible for him, or for any man, to have formed a deliberate purpose to betray him (Peter, it may be said, was taken by surprize, and was in personal danger) or if he had only heard of the pretension, and had not believed it, would he not have made some advantage of that imposition, and have made the discovery of this, as well as of every thing else that he knew to his prejudice?

If it be supposed that the divinity of Christ was unknown to the apostles till the day of Pentecost; besides losing the benefit of several arguments for this great doctrine, which are now carefully collected from the four evangelists, we have no account of any such discovery having been made at that time, or at any subsequent one. And of all other articles of illumination, of much less consequence than this, we have distinct information, and also of the manner in which they were impressed by them. This is particularly

particularly the case with respect to the extension of the blessings of the gospel to uncircumcised Gentiles. But what was this article to the knowledge of their master, being the most high God, or the maker of the world under God?

It might have been expected, also, that the information that a person whom the apostles first conversed with as a man, was either God himself, or the maker of the world under God, should have been received with some degree of *doubt* and *hesitation*, by some or other of them; especially as they had been so very hard to be persuaded of the truth of his resurrection, though they had been so fully apprized of it before hand. And yet, in all the history of the apostles, there is the same profound silence concerning this circumstance, and every other depending on the whole scheme, as if no such thing had ever had any existence.

If the doctrine of the divinity of Christ had been actually preached by the apostles, and the Jewish converts in general had adopted it, it could not but have been well known to the unbelieving Jews. And would they,

they, who were at that time, and have been ever since, so exceedingly zealous with respect to the doctrine of the divine unity, not have taken the alarm, and have urged this objection to christianity, as teaching the belief of more Gods than one in the apostolic age? And yet no trace of any thing of this nature can be perceived in the whole history of the book of Acts, or any where else in the New Testament. As soon as ever the Jews had any pretence for it, we find them sufficiently quick and vehement in urging this their great objection to christianity. To answer the charge of holding *two*, or *three Gods*, is a very considerable article in the writings of several of the ancient christian Fathers. Why, then, do we find nothing of this kind in the age of the apostles? The only answer is, that then there was no occasion for it, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ not having been started.

If we consider the charge that was advanced against Peter and John at the first promulgation of the gospel, we shall find it amounts to nothing but their being disturbers

turbers of the people, by *preaching in the name of Jesus*. What was the accusation against Stephen (Acts vi. 13.) but his *speaking blasphemous things against the temple and the law*? If we accompany the apostle Paul in all his travels, and attend to his discourses with the Jews in their synagogues, and their perpetual and inveterate persecution of him, we shall find no trace of their so [much as suspecting that he preached a *new divinity*, as the godhead of Christ must have appeared, and always has appeared to them.

In A. D. 58, Paul tells the elders of the church of Ephesus (Acts xx. 27.) that he had not shunned to declare unto them *the whole counsel of God*. We may be confident, therefore, that if he had any such doctrine to divulge, he must have taught it in the three years that he spent in that city, from 54 to 57; and as the unbelieving Jews were well apprized of all his motions, having laid wait for him on this very journey to Jerusalem, they must have been informed of his having taught this doctrine, and would certainly have carried the news of it



to Jerufalem, where many of them attended as well as he, at the enfuing feaft of Pentecoft. But if we attend Paul thither, where we have a very particular account of all the proceedings againft him, for the fpace of two years, we fhall find no trace of any thing of the kind. All their complaints againft him fell far fhort of this.

What was the occafion of the firft clamour againft him? was it not (Afts xxi.28) *that he taught all men, every where, againft the people, and againft the law, and againft the temple, and that he had brought Greeks into it?* Is it not plain that they had no more ferious charges againft him? If we read his fpeech to the people, his defence before Felix, and again before Agrippa, we fhall find no trace of his having taught any doctrine fo offensive to the Jews as that of the divinity of Chrift muft have been. Con- fidering the known prejudices, and the inveteracy of the Jews, no reasonable man need defire any clearer proof than this, that neither Paul, nor any of the apoftles, had ever taught the doctrine of the divinity of Chrift at that time; and this was fo near  
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the time of the wars of the Jews, and the dispersion of that people, that there was no opportunity of preaching it with effect afterwards.

Is it possible to give due attention to these considerations, and not be sensible, that the apostles had never been instructed in any such doctrines as those of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ? If they had, as the doctrines were quite *new*, and must have appeared *extraordinary*, we should certainly have been able to trace the *time* when they were communicated to them. They would naturally have expressed some *surprize*, if they had intimated no *doubt* of the truth of the information. If they received them with unshaken faith themselves, they would have taught them to others, who would not have received them so readily. They would have had the doubts of some to encounter, and the objections of others to answer. And yet, in all their history, and copious writings, we perceive no trace of their own surprize, or doubts, or of the surprize, doubts, or objections of others.

Arians will think that the observations in this section do not apply with much force, except to the doctrine of the proper *divinity of Christ*, their own doctrine of the *pre-existence* of Christ, and of his having been the maker of the world under God, being familiar to their minds. But they should consider that the Jews in our Saviour's time had never heard of any such being as they suppose Christ to be ; and therefore they would have received the account of it with perhaps even more surprize than the doctrine of God himself, having made his appearance in human form. In the Old Testament there is no account of God having employed any such being as Christ in the making of the world, and he spake to the patriarchs either by angels, or some temporary appearance, which may sometimes have been in the form of man.

It is really something extraordinary, that this opinion, that Christ was the medium of all the divine communications to mankind under the Old Testament dispensation, should have been so readily received, and have spread so generally as it did among  
christians,

christians, when it not only has no countenance from scripture, but is expressly contradicted by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, in Heb. i. 1. *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.* Again, chap. ii. 2, 3. *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast; &c. how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord.* What can be more evident than that the writer of this epistle had no idea of God having spoken to mankind by his Son before the time of the gospel?

To the Jews, however, the Arian doctrine must have been more *novel* than that of the orthodox christians in the time of Justin Martyr, and therefore, would probably have been received with more surprise. It was that kind of orthodoxy which was advanced by Justin Martyr, that prepared the way for the Arian doctrine, as will be seen in its proper place.

## S E C T I O N III.

*An Argument against the Divinity of Christ,  
from his not being the Object of Prayer.*

**I**T must be acknowledged that the proper object of prayer is God the Father, who is called the *first person in the trinity*. Indeed, we cannot find in the scriptures either any *precept* that will authorize us to address ourselves to any other person, or any proper *example* of it. Every thing that can be alledged to this purpose, as Stephen's short ejaculatory address to Christ, whom he had just before seen in vision, &c. is very inconsiderable. Our Saviour himself always prayed to his Father, and with as much humility and resignation as the most dependent being in the universe could possibly do; always addressing him as *his Father*, or the author of his being; and he directs his disciples to pray to the same great being, *whom only*, he says, *we ought to serve*.

Had he intended to guard against all mistake on this subject, by speaking of God

as the author of his being in the same sense in which he is the author of being to all men, he could not have done it more expressly than he has, by calling him his Father and our Father, his God and our God. At the same time he calls his disciples his brethren (John xx. 17) *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* Can any person read this, and say that the unitarians wrest the scriptures, and are not guided by the plain sense of them?

Accordingly, the practice of praying to the Father only, was long universal in the christian church. The short addresses to Christ, as those in the Litany, *Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us,* being comparatively of late date. In the Clementine liturgy, the oldest that is extant, contained in the Apostolical Constitutions, which were probably composed about the fourth century, there is no trace of any such thing. Origen, in a large treatise on the subject of prayer, urges very forcibly the propriety of praying to the Father only, and not to Christ; and as he gives no hint

that the public forms of prayer had any thing reprehensible in them in that respect, we are naturally led to conclude that, in his time, such petitions to Christ were unknown in the public assemblies of christians. And such hold have early established customs on the minds of men, that, excepting the Moravians only, whose prayers are always addressed to Christ, the general practice of trinitarians themselves is to pray to the Father only.

Now on what *principle* could this early and universal *practice* have been founded? What is there in the doctrine of a trinity consisting of three equal persons, to entitle the *Father* to that distinction, in preference to the *Son*, or the *Spirit*? I doubt not but that, considering the thing *ab initio*, a proper trinitarian would have thought that, since, of these three persons, it is the *second* that was the maker of the world, and that is the immediate governor of it, he is that person of the three with whom we have most to do; and therefore he is that person to whom our prayers ought to be addressed. This, I should think, would  
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have been a natural conclusion, even if Christ had not been thought to be equal to the Father, but only the maker and the governor of the world under him; supposing him to have had power originally given him equal to the making and governing of it, as I have shewn in my *Disquisitions on matter and spirit*, Vol. I. p. 376. For we should naturally look up to that being on whom we immediately depend, knowing that it must be his proper province to attend to us.

If there should have been any reason in the nature of things, though undiscoverable and incomprehensible by us, why the world should have been made, and supported, by some being of communicated and delegated authority, rather than by the self-existent and supreme being himself (and if the fact be so, there must have been some good reason for it) that unknown reason, whatever it be, naturally presents this derived being to us, as the proper object of our prayers.

But supposing this second person in the trinity to be our independent maker, gover-



nor and final judge, the propriety of praying to him, and to him exclusively, is so obvious, that no consideration whatever could have prevented the practice, if such had been the real belief of the christian world from the beginning. That christians did not do so at first, but prayed habitually to the Father only, is, therefore, with me almost a demonstration, that they did not consider Christ in that light. Whatever they might think of him, they did not regard him as being a proper object of worship, and consequently not as possessed of the attributes that are proper to constitute him one, and therefore not as truly God. The persuasion that he was truly God, and that God on whom we immediately depend, would unavoidably have drawn after it the habitual practice of praying to him, as it has at length effected with respect to the Moravians; and in spite of ancient custom, and against all scripture precept and example, the practice has more or less prevailed with all trinitarians. Petrarch, we find by his letters, generally prayed to Christ; that pious treatise of Thomas-a-Kempis,

Kempis, on *the imitation of Christ*, consists of nothing besides addresses to him, and they compose the greater part of the litany of the church of England.

When I was myself a trinitarian, I remember praying conscientiously to all the three persons without distinction, only beginning with the Father; and what I myself did in the serious simplicity of my heart, when young, would, I doubt not, have been done by all christians from the beginning, if their minds had then been impressed, as mine was, with the firm persuasion that all the three persons were fully equal in power, wisdom, goodness, omnipresence, and all divine attributes. This argument I recommend to the serious consideration of all trinitarians, as it is with me a sufficient proof, that originally Christ was not considered as a proper object of worship by christians, and consequently neither as God, nor as the maker and governor of the world under God.

As this is a thing that relates to *practice*, I should have imagined that, if each of the three persons had been to be addressed separately,

parately, we should have been distinctly informed concerning the circumstances in which we were to pray to any one of them, and not to the others; considering how difficult it must be, from the nature of the thing, for mere *men* to distinguish the separate rights of three *divine persons*.

It has been said by some, that Christ is the proper object of prayer in the time of external persecution. But let us consider how the supposition, or theory, corresponds to the fact. For if it be not supported by corresponding facts, how ingenious, or probable soever it may seem to be *a priori*, it must fall to the ground. The apostles and primitive christians certainly knew whether the Father, or the Son, was the more proper object of prayer in the time of persecution. Let us see then both what *directions* they gave, and also what they themselves actually *did* in this case.

The apostle James, writing to christians in a state of persecution, says, ch. i. 2, &c. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, or trials, &c. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.* It can hardly

hardly be said that, in this he advises them to apply to Christ, or to the trinity for direction in these circumstances. This hypothesis has no countenance either in the scriptures, or in any christian writer before the council of Nice. For they all understood the Father alone to be intended, whenever mention is made of *God* absolutely.

Peter, writing to christians in the same situation, says, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.* This is certainly meant of God the Father; but more evidently must we so interpret 1 Pet. v. 10, *The God of all grace who has called us unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.* I do not find here, or any where else in the scriptures, any direction to pray to Christ in time of persecution; or indeed, in any other circumstances.

Let us now attend to some particulars in the history of the apostles. When Herod had put to death James, the brother of  
John,

John, and imprisoned Peter, we read, Acts xii. 5. that *prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God, not to Christ, for him.* When Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi, we read, Acts, xvi. 25. that they *sung praises to God, not to Christ.* And when Paul was warned of what would befall him if he went to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 14. he said *the will of the Lord be done.* This, it must be supposed, was meant of God the Father, because Christ himself used the same language in this sense, when, praying to the Father, he said, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

These, it may perhaps be said, are only incidental circumstances, on which no great stress is to be laid. But in Acts iv. 24, &c. we have a prayer of some length addressed to God the Father, at the very beginning of the persecution of christians, when Peter and John had been examined before the high-priest, and his court, and had been threatened by them. The whole of it is as follows: *And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord; and said, Lord, thou art God, who hast made hea-*  
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ven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: who, by the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, “Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord, and against his Christ.” For of a truth against thy holy Child (or servant) Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy Child (or servant) Jesus.

We have now examined some particulars both of the *instructions*, and the *examples* of scripture, with regard to the proper object of prayer in time of persecution; from which it appears, that even in this case, we have no authority to pray to any other than that one God, to whom Christ himself prayed.

prayed in his affliction ; and if we be not authorized to pray to Christ in time of persecution, there is, it is acknowledged, less propriety in praying to him on any other occasion.

As many profess a great regard for those who are called apostolical Fathers, let us attend to the prayer of Polycarp, when he was tied to the stake, ready to be burned alive. Now this prayer, which is a pretty remarkable one, is addressed to God the Father, and not to Christ ; so that this disciple of the apostle John, did not think the example of Stephen any precedent for him. The prayer begins as follows : “ O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ ; by whom we have received the knowledge of thee, the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and especially of the whole race of just men, &c.”

We see then, how greatly men may be misled by speculative theology, by an attention to particular texts, single incidents, and imaginary proprieties, without attending to the general tenor of scripture, the plain directions

directions that are there given for our conduct, and the constant practice of the apostles, which supply the best interpretation of their doctrine. To conclude, as some have done, from the single case of Stephen, that all christians are authorized to pray to Christ, is like concluding that all matter has a tendency to go upwards, because a needle will do so when a magnet is held over it. When they shall be in the same circumstances with Stephen, having their minds strongly impressed with a vision of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, they may then, perhaps, be authorized to address themselves to him as he did; but the whole tenor of the scriptures proves that, otherwise we have no authority at all for any such practice. And if Christ be not the object of prayer, he cannot be either God, or the maker and governor of the world under God.

SECTION



## SECTION IV.

*Of the Arguments against the Doctrine of the Trinity as implying a Contradiction.*

**I**T has been shewn that there is no such doctrine as that of the trinity in the scriptures, but I will now add that, if it had been found there, it would have been impossible for a reasonable man to believe it, as it implies *a contradiction*, which no miracles can prove.

I ask then, wherein does the Athanasian doctrine of the trinity differ from a contradiction? It asserts in effect that nothing is wanting to either the Father, the Son, or the Spirit, to constitute each of them truly and properly *God*, each of them being equal in eternity, and all divine perfections; and yet that these three are not *three Gods*, but only *one God*. They are therefore both *one* and *many* in the same respect, viz. in each being *perfect God*. This is certainly as much a contradiction, as to say that Peter, James, and John, having each of them

them every thing that is requisite to constitute a complete man, are yet all together not *three men*, but only *one man*. For the ideas annexed to the words *God*, or *man*, cannot make any difference in the nature of the two propositions. After the council of Nice, there are instances of the doctrine of the trinity being explained in this very manner. The Fathers of that age being particularly intent on preserving the full *equality* of the three persons, entirely lost sight of their proper *unity*. And in what manner soever this doctrine be explained, one of these must ever be sacrificed to the other.

As persons are apt to confound themselves with the use of the words *person* and *being*, I shall endeavour to give a plain account of them.

The term *being* may be predicated of every thing, and therefore of each of the three persons in the trinity. For to say that Christ, for instance, is God, but that there is no *being*, no *substance*, to which his attributes may be referred, were manifestly absurd; and therefore when it is said that each of these persons is by himself God, the mean-

ing must be, that the Father, separately considered, has a *being*, that the Son, separately considered, has a *being*, and likewise, that the Holy Spirit, separately considered, has a *being*. Here then are no less than *three beings*, as well as *three persons*, and what can these three beings be but *three Gods*, without supposing that there are “three co-ordinate persons, or three Fathers, three Sons, or three Holy Ghosts?”

By the words *being*, *substance*, *substratum*, &c. we can mean nothing more than the foundation, as it were, of properties, or something to which, in our idea, we refer all the particular attributes of whatever exists. In fact, they are terms that may be predicated of every thing that is the subject of thought or discourse, all the discrimination of things depending upon their peculiar properties. So that whenever the *properties* differ, we say that there is a corresponding difference in the *things*, *beings*, or *substances* themselves. Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit, differ in any respect, so as to have different properties, either in relation to themselves, or to other beings,

beings, we must, according to the analogy of all language, say that they are three different beings, or substances.

Supposing again, that there is an identity of attributes in each of them, so that, being considered one after the other, no difference should be perceived in them, even in idea, (as may be supposed to be the case of three men, who should perfectly resemble one another in all external and internal properties) and supposing, moreover, that there should be a perfect coincidence in all their thoughts and actions; though there might be a perfect *harmony* among them, and this might be called *unity*, they would still be *numerically three*. Consequently, though the Father, Son, and Spirit had no real differences, but, as has been said, they had “the most perfect identity of nature, the  
“most entire unity of will, and consent of  
“intellect, and an incessant co-operation in  
“the exertion of common powers, to a  
“common purpose,” yet would they, according to the analogy of language, not be *one God*, but *three Gods*; or which is the same thing, they would be *three beings*, with  
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equal divine natures, just as the three men would be three beings, with equal human natures.

The term *being*, as I have observed, may be predicated of every thing without distinction; but the term *person*, is limited to intelligent beings. Three men, therefore, are not only three beings, but likewise three persons; the former is the *genus*, and the latter the *species*. But a *person* is not the less a *being* on this account; for each man may be said to be a being, as well as a person. Consequently, though the word *person* be properly applied to each of the three component parts of the trinity, yet as *person* is a *species*, comprehended under the genus *being*, they must be three beings, as well as three persons.

The term *God*, is a sub-division under the term *person*, because we define God to be "an intelligent being, possessed of all possible perfections." Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit, be each of them possessed of all possible perfections, which is not denied, they are each of them a *person*, each of them a *being*, and each of them a *God*;

a God; and what is this but making *three Gods*. Let any trinitarian avoid this conclusion, from these principles, or assume other principles more just and natural; if he can.

This definition of the word *person*, as applied to the doctrine of the trinity, will perhaps be objected to; but if any other definition be given, I will venture to assert, that it might as well be said that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are *three Abracadabras*, as *three persons*. They will be equally words without meaning.

It has been said, that “ the personal existence of a divine logos is implied in the very idea of a God, and that the argument rests on a principle which was common to all the Platonic Fathers, and seems to be founded in scripture, that the existence of the Son flows necessarily from the divine intellect exerted on itself, from the Father’s contemplation of his own perfections. But as the Father ever was, his perfections have ever been, and his intellect has ever been active. But perfections which have ever been, the

“ ever active intellect must ever have con-  
 “ templated ; and the contemplation which  
 “ has ever been, must ever have been ac-  
 “ companied with its just effect; the per-  
 “ sonal existence of the Son.”

But there is nothing in the scriptures, or indeed in the Fathers, that gives any countenance to this reasoning. As we cannot pretend to draw any conclusions from the necessary operations of one mind, but from their supposed analogy to those of other minds, that is, our own, those who maintain this hypothesis, must explain to us how it comes to pass, that if the contemplation of the divine perfections of the Father, necessarily produced a distinct person in him, fully equal to himself, a man's contemplation of such perfections or powers, as *he* is possessed of, should not produce another intelligent person fully equal to himself.

It will perhaps be said (though there is nothing to authorize it) that the impossibility of producing this in man, is the imperfection of his faculties, or his limited power of contemplating them. But to cut  
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off that subterfuge, I will ask why the contemplation of the Son's perfections, which are supposed to be fully equal to those of the Father, and whose energy of contemplation must likewise be supposed equal to that of the Father, does not produce another intelligent being equal to himself; and why are not persons in the Godhead in this manner multiplied *ad infinitum*?

If, for any incomprehensible reason, this mysterious *power of generation* be peculiar to the Father, why does it not still operate? Is he not an unchangeable being, the same now that he was from the beginning, his perfections the same, and his power of contemplating them the same? Why then are not more sons produced? Is he become *αγνοῦ*, incapable of this generation, as the orthodox Fathers used to ask; or does it depend upon his will and pleasure whether he will exert this power of generation? If so, is not the Son as much a *creature*, depending on the will of the creator, as any thing else produced by him, though in another manner; and this whether he be *of the same substance* (*ομοουσιῶ*) with him, or not?



I should also like to know in what manner the third person in the trinity was produced. Was it by the joint exertion of the two first, in the contemplation of their respective perfections? If so, why does not the same operation in them produce a fourth, &c. &c. &c.

Admitting, however, this strange account of the generation of the trinity (equal in absurdity to any thing in the Jewish cabala) viz. that the personal existence of the Son necessarily flows from the intellect of the Father exerted on itself; it certainly implies a virtual *priority*, or *superiority* in the Father with respect to the Son; and no being can be properly God, who has any superior. In short, this scheme effectually overturns the doctrine of the proper *equality*, as well as the *unity* of the three persons in the trinity.

SECTION

S E C T I O N V.

*Of the Nature of the Arian Hypothesis, and of the Proof which is necessary to make it credible.*

THE doctrine of the *trinity* may be reduced, as has been shewn, to a proper *contradiction*, or a mathematical impossibility, which is incapable of proof, even by miracles. This cannot be said of the *Arian hypothesis*. Because, for any thing that we certainly know, God might have created one being of such extraordinary power, as should make it unnecessary for him to exert any more creative power; so that all that remained of creation might be delegated to that great derived being. But it is highly improbable that this should have been the case. And the more improbable, *a priori*, any proposition is, on account of its want of analogy to other propositions, the truth of which is admitted, the clearer and stronger evidence we require before we give our assent to it. This improbability may

may be so great, as to approach very nearly to an impossibility. At least the impression made upon the mind will hardly be distinguished in the two cases, and the resistance to assent shall be, in a manner, as great in the one as in the other. Consequently, though the doctrine be not incapable of proof by miracles, yet it will be necessary that the proposition which contains it, be very clearly expressed, that the miracles alledged in support of it be well authenticated, and that the connexion between the miracles and the proposition be very particularly established. Let us now consider whether this be the case with respect to the Arian doctrine.

1. There is something in the doctrine itself, which, if we were not accustomed to it, would appear exceedingly revolting. Such, certainly, is the idea of any being in human form, who was born, grew up, and died like other men; requiring the refreshments of food, rest, and sleep, &c. having been the maker, and while he was on earth, and asleep, the supporter and governor of the world. Had such an opinion

nion been first proposed in the present state of philosophy, it would have been rejected without farther examination.

That Christ emptied himself of his former glory and power, and did not sustain the world during his abode on earth, is quite a modern opinion; and, on that account only, can never be received as the original and genuine doctrine of christianity. Besides, this hypothesis is of itself as improbable as the other. For it may reasonably be asked, Who supplied the place of Christ in the government of the world, when his office was suspended? If the supreme Being himself undertook it, what reason can there be imagined why he should not himself have always done it? And yet, if there was a reason, in the nature of things, why this work should be done by another, and not by the supreme Being himself, that reason must have subsisted while Christ was on earth as well as before. But the Arian hypothesis provides no other created being, of rank and power equal to that of Christ, to undertake his office when he should be disabled from  
discharging

discharging it. A contradiction is hardly more revolting to the mind than the improbabilities attending such a scheme as this.

2. It is obvious to remark, that the Arian hypothesis is no where clearly expressed in the scriptures, and much less is it repeated so often, and so much stress laid upon it, as its natural magnitude required. The Old Testament, it is allowed, contains no such doctrine as that of God having made the world by the instrumentality of any intermediate being; and yet, as we have there the history of the creation, and as the doctrine of one God having made the heavens and the earth is frequently repeated in the several books of it, it might have been expected that, if there had been such a being as the Arians suppose Christ to be, and he had made the world by the direction of the supreme being, some mention would have been made of it *there*, that being its natural and proper place.

3. The doctrine of Christ having made the world has no connexion with the great and obvious design of the mission of any  
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of the prophets in general, or that of Christ and the apostles in particular. The great object of the whole scheme of revelation was to teach men how to live here, so as to be happy hereafter, and the particular doctrines which we are taught, as having a connexion with this great object, are those of the unity of God, his universal presence and inspection, his placability to repenting sinners, and the certainty of a resurrection to a life of retribution after death. These doctrines occur perpetually in the discourses and writings of the prophets, of the evangelists, and of the apostles; and the miracles which they wrought have so evident a connexion with these doctrines, that it is impossible to admit their divine mission without receiving them.

On the other hand, the doctrine of there being such a super-angelic spirit as *the Arian logos*, the maker and governor of all things under the supreme God, has no connexion with the doctrines above mentioned. It may be true or false altogether independent of them. It does not, therefore, follow that, admitting that such had been

the private opinion of those persons who were divinely inspired, and impowered to work miracles; that their inspiration, or their miracles, could give any sanction to this particular doctrine; their inspiration and miracles relating to another distinct object; and not to this. And it must be acknowledged, that a prophet who has received no instruction from God relating to any particular subject, may be as much mistaken with respect to it as any other person whatever.

Now, considering that no such doctrine as that of there being a subordinate maker of the world was taught by Moses, or any of the ancient prophets, and that Christ himself, as it must be allowed, taught no such doctrine (though he himself be supposed to have been that very person) had it been advanced by the apostles, their auditors, who admitted their authority in other things, might very reasonably have demanded a distinct proof of *an additional doctrine*, so very new and strange, and so unconnected with their other teaching, as this was. They might have said, " We admit  
" that

“ that Jesus is the Messiah ; we acknowledge  
“ that he rose from the dead, and we believe  
“ that he will come again to raise all the  
“ dead, and to judge the world ; but this  
“ doctrine of Christ having made the world  
“ is quite another thing. It was not taught  
“ by Moses, or by Christ, and therefore,  
“ we cannot receive it except upon new and  
“ independent evidence. What miracles  
“ do you work in order to shew that you  
“ are commissioned to teach *this* doctrine ?”  
Now, as it is not pretended that there are  
any miracles particularly adapted to prove  
that Christ made and supports the world,  
I do not see that we are under any obliga-  
tion to believe it merely because it was an  
opinion held by an apostle.

4. The doctrine of Christ having made  
the world, is not expressed by any of the  
apostles in a manner so definite and clear, or  
so repeatedly, as its magnitude naturally re-  
quired. For the passages in their writings  
from which it has been inferred that they  
held this opinion, are very few, and by no  
means clear and express to the purpose.  
Had this doctrine been true, being of so  
extraordinary



extraordinary a nature, and so much unlike to any thing that Jews or christians had been taught before, it would, no doubt, when it was first promulgated, have been delivered with the greatest distinctness, so as to leave no uncertainty with respect to it; and unless it had been urged by the apostles again and again, and with peculiar force and emphasis, their auditors would naturally have imagined that they only made use of some figurative forms of speech, and did not seriously mean to advance a doctrine so very remote from their former apprehensions of things.

But in all the writings of the apostles, there are only four passages from which it has been pretended that, in their opinion, Christ was the maker of the world; and in one of them no mention is made of Christ. As they are so very few, I shall recite them all, that my reader may have the whole evidence of this extraordinary doctrine fairly before him.

No mention is made of this doctrine in any book in the New Testament which was written before the imprisonment of  
Paul

Paul at Rome, A. D. 61 and 62, and then by this one apostle only. Writing to the Ephesians, he says (ch. iii. 9) *to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.* This is only an incidental expression at the close of a sentence, the object of which was to teach something else; also both the terms *creation*, and *all things*, are of very uncertain signification, and therefore, may well be supposed to refer to what is figuratively called *the new creation*, or the *reformation* of the world.

The same apostle, in the epistle to the Collossians (ch. i. 15) says of Christ, *who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers. All things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist; and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-*

*born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.* On this passage it is obvious to remark, that the things which Christ is said to have made are not the heavens or the earth, but some things that were *in* the heavens and *in* the earth; and these were not natural objects, such as stars or planets, trees or animals, &c. but the creation, or establishment, of such things as *thrones* and *dominions*, and therefore may naturally be interpreted as referring to some exercise of that *power in heaven and in earth*, which Christ says was given to him after his resurrection. Also, as his being *the head of the body, the church*, is mentioned after all the other particulars; it is most probable that this power, whatever it was, related only to his church, and that it had nothing to do with the creation of the heavens or the earth.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle says (ch. i. 1, &c.) *God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the Fathers, by the prophets, hath, in these last days spoken unto us by his Son; whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom*

*Divinity or Pre-existence of Christ.* 67

*whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.*

In this passage it is evident, that it was not the object of the writer to make an express assertion concerning the making of the world by Christ, so as to exhibit it as an article of any consequence. He was asserting something else; and what he does say on the subject is only one incidental circumstance, among several others. And is it to be supposed that a doctrine of this importance would never be laid down but in such a manner as this. Besides, nothing is here said, or intimated, about Christ making the *material worlds*, for it is only said that he made the *ages* (*αιωνας*) and the *all things* here mentioned evidently means all things relating to a particular object, viz. the mission of Christ, and not all the works of nature.

Lastly, in the introduction to the gospel of John, we read, *In the beginning was the*  
F 2 *word,*

*word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him (or, rather by it) and without him (it) was not any thing made that was made.* In this celebrated passage, there is no mention, as I observed before, of Christ, and that the *word* (logos) means Christ is not to be taken for granted; since another interpretation is very obvious and natural, viz. that the *word* here spoken of is the proper *word, or power of God*, by which the scriptures of the Old Testament inform us, that all things were actually made. Thus the Psalmist says, Pf. xxxiii. 6, &c. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.* The same word or power resided in Christ, and performed all his miraculous works. Agreeably to which he himself says, *the Father within me he does the works.*

On the slender foundation of these four passages, rests the great doctrine of Christ having been the instrument in the hands of God of making the world and all things. When they are all put together, and even shutting

shutting our eyes on all the direct and positive evidence that the world was made by the supreme being himself, and by no other acting under him, can it be said that they all together amount to a sufficiently clear declaration of a doctrine of so much magnitude as the Arian hypothesis is, viz. that Christ, having been first created himself, did (and, as far as appears, without any previous essays or efforts) immediately make the whole system of the visible universe, and from that time support all the laws of it, himself only being supported, or perhaps unsupported, by the Father.

Where would have been the evidence of the Arian hypothesis, if Paul had not written the two epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, which are supposed to contain it. For, little as is the evidence for this doctrine from the passages I have recited from these epistles, it is much greater than that which can be derived from the two others. And had neither the epistles themselves, nor the introduction to the gospel of John been ever written, it would not have been suspected that

any thing was wanting in the scheme of christianity.

However, it is not, certainly, from so few casual expressions, which so easily admit of other interpretations, and especially in *epistolary writings*, which are seldom composed with so much care as books intended for the use of posterity, that we can be authorized to infer that such was the serious opinion of the apostles. But if it had been their real opinion, it would not follow that it was true, unless the teaching of it should appear to be included in their general commission, with which, as I have shewn, it has no sort of connexion.

If any should be convinced that these four passages, do not authorize us to conclude that Christ made the world, they must be interpreted in such a manner as not to imply his *simple pre-existence*; and if this cannot be inferred from these texts, it certainly cannot from any other. Consequently, both the doctrine of Christ having made the world, and that of his simple pre-existence, must stand or fall together.

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5. It will be seen in its proper place, that the Arian hypothesis, loaded as it is with the greatest natural improbabilities, and altogether destitute of support in the scriptures, was the natural consequence of other false principles, which also naturally sprung from the philosophy of the times in which christianity was promulgated. That philosophy is now exploded, but the articles in the christian system which were derived from it remain. Platonism is no more; but the trinitarian and Arian doctrines yet subsist; and with many, the latter remains, when the former, from which it arose, is abandoned. Thus the fruit is preserved, when the tree on which it grew, is cut down.

Had there been no *Platonic nous*, or *logos*, christians would never have got a *divine logos*, or *second God*, the creator of the world under the supreme God, and the medium of all the divine communications to the patriarchs; and had there been no such *divine* and *uncreated logos* in the christian system, we should never, I am confident,



have heard of *a created logos* being provided to answer the same purpose.

Also, if it had not been a doctrine familiar to all the schools of philosophy, that the souls of men in general had pre-existed, it would never have been imagined that the created soul of Christ had pre-existed. But when other souls are deprived of this great privilege, it remains, contrary to all analogy, and all principles of just reasoning, attached to that of Christ only, just as with many, the doctrine of a divine uncreated logos is abandoned, and that of the created logos, which sprung from it, remains in its place. But an attention to the true causes and original supports of the Arian doctrine in all its parts, and the reasons for which these causes and supports of it have been given up, cannot fail to draw after it, in due time, the downfall of the Arian doctrine itself. In the mean time it is held by many as being a medium between two great extremes, the doctrine of the *proper divinity* of Christ on the one hand, and that of his *simple humanity* on the other.

## SECTION

SECTION VI.

*Reasons for not considering Arians as being properly Unitarians.*

THE great objection to the doctrine of the trinity is, that it is an infringement of the doctrine of the unity of God, as the sole object of worship, which it was the primary design of the whole system of revelation to establish. Any modification of this doctrine, therefore, or any other system whatever, ought to be regarded with suspicion, in proportion as it makes a multiplicity of objects of worship, for that is to introduce IDOLATRY.

That the doctrine of three persons in the divine nature is making three Gods, has, I think, been sufficiently proved. But they who do not think that Christ is equal to the supreme being, but only the maker and governor of the world under him, are willing to think that they are not included  
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in the censure of making a multiplicity of gods, or in any danger of introducing more objects of worship. They therefore call themselves *unitarians*, and think themselves perfectly clear of the charge of giving any countenance to *idolatry*. Indeed, this is an accusation to which the Athanasians themselves plead *not guilty*. I think, however, that it applies not only to them, but even to the Arians, and therefore, that strictly speaking, the latter are no more entitled to the appellation of *unitarians* than the former. My reasons for this are the following :

1. If *greatness of power* be a foundation on which to apply the title of God, they who believe that Christ made the world, and that he constantly preserves and governs it, must certainly consider him as enjoying a very high rank in the scale of divinity, whatever reason they may have to decline giving him the title of God. They must allow that he is a much greater *being*, or *God*, than Apollo, or even Jupiter, was ever supposed to be. His derivation from another, and a greater God, is no reason why  
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he should not likewise be considered as a *God*. The polytheism of the heathens did not consist in making two or more equal and independent gods, but in having one supreme God, and the rest subordinate, which is the very thing that the Arians hold.

We have no idea of any power greater than that of *creation*, which the Arians ascribe to Christ, especially if by creation be meant *creation out of nothing*; and the Arians do not now say that the Father first produced matter, and that then the Son formed it into worlds, &c. a notion indeed, advanced, as will be seen, by Philo and Methodius among the ancients, but too ridiculous to be retained by any; so that whatever he meant by *creation*, the Arians ascribe it to Christ.

2. Upon the principle which is adopted by many Arians, we must acknowledge not only two Gods, but gods without number. According to some, Christ made this solar system only. There must, therefore, have been other beings, of equal rank with him, to whom the creation, or formation, of the other systems was assigned; and observation

tion shows, that there are millions and millions of systems. The probability is, that they fill the whole extent of infinite space. Here, then, are infinitely *more*, as well as infinitely *greater* gods, than the heathens ever thought of.

But I would observe, that the modern Arians, in ascribing to Christ the formation of the whole solar system, ascribe more to him than the ancient Arians did ; for they did not suppose that he made any thing more than *this world*, because they had no knowledge of any other. Had the ancients had any proper idea of the extent of the solar system ; had they believed that it contained as many worlds as there are primary and secondary planets belonging to it, all of which might stand in as much need of the interposition of their maker as that which we inhabit, they would, probably, have been staggered at the thought of giving such an extensive power and agency to any one *created being* ; much less is it probable that they would *at once* have gone so far as the generality of modern Arians, who suppose that Christ made the whole universe. That

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would

would have been to give him so much power, and so extensive an agency, that the Supreme Father would not have been missed, if, after the production of such a Son, he had himself either remained an inactive spectator in the universe, or even retired out of existence. For why might not the power of *self-subsistence* be imparted to another as well as that of *creating out of nothing*.

3. If we consider the train of reasoning by which we infer that there is only *one God*, it will be found, that, according to the Arian hypothesis, Christ himself may be that one God. We are led to the idea of God by inquiring into the cause of what we see; and the being which is able to produce all that we see, or know, we call *God*. We cannot, by the light of nature, go any farther; and the reason why we say that there is only *one God*, is, that we see such marks of uniformity in the whole system, and such a mutual relation of all the parts to each other, that we cannot think that one part was contrived or executed by one being, and another part by another being. Whoever it was that made the  
*plants,*

*plants*, for instance, must also have made the *animals* that feed upon them. Whatever being made, and superintends, the *land*, must also have made, and must superintend the *water*, &c. We also cannot suppose that the *earth*, had one author, and the *moon* another, or indeed any part of the solar system. And for the same reason that the whole solar system had one author, all the other systems, which have any relation to it (and the probability is that the whole universe is one connected system) had the same author. There can be no reason, therefore, why any persons should stop at supposing that Christ made the solar system only. For the same reason that his province includes this system, it ought to include all the universe, which is giving him an absolute *omnipresence*, as well as *omnipotence*; and I shall then leave others to distinguish between this being, and that God whom they would place above him. For my own part, I see no room for any thing above him. Imagination itself cannot make any difference between them. If, therefore, the Arian principle be pursued to its proper

per extent, we must either say that there are two infinite beings, or Gods, or else that Christ is the one God.

4. If any being become the object of our worship in consequence of our dependence upon him, and our receiving all our blessings from him; and also in consequence of his being invisibly present with us, so that we may be sure both that he always hears us, and that he is able to assist us; Christ, on the Arian hypothesis, coming under 'this description, must be the proper object of all that we ever call *worship*, and therefore must be God. For he who *made all things*, and who *upholds all things by the word of his power*, must necessarily be present every where, and know all things, as well as be able to do all things. If he only made and takes care of this earth, he must be present in all parts of the earth. There must, therefore, be the greatest *natural propriety* in our praying to such a being. A being to whom these characters belong has always been considered as the object of the highest worship that man can pay. The Psalmist says, Ps. xciv. 6. *O come, let us worship*



*ship, and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* If, therefore, Christ be the Lord our maker, we are fully authorized to worship and bow down before him.

5. If the *logos* be Christ, Arians cannot refuse to give him the appellation of God. For John says, ch. i. 1. *and the word was God.* Thus, I believe all Arians interpret the passage. It is, therefore, not a little extraordinary, that they should pretend that they do not acknowledge *two Gods.* They will say that Christ is God in an inferior sense, as Moses is called a god with respect to Pharaoh. But according to the Arian hypothesis, Christ is God in a very different sense from that in which Moses could ever be so. He is a God not in *name* only, but in *power.* They do not even acknowledge a great God, and a little one; but a very great God, and another greater than he. On this account, the Arians were always considered as *polytheists* by the ancient trinitarians; while the unitarians were regarded as Jews, holding the unity of God in too strict a sense. For these reasons I own that, in my opinion, those who are usually called  
*Socinians*

*Socinians* (who consider Christ as being a mere man) are the only body of christians who are properly entitled to the appellation of *unitarians*; and that the *Arians* are even less entitled to it than the *Athanasians*, who also lay claim to it. The *Athanasian system*, according to one explanation of it, is certainly *tritheism*, but according to another it is mere *nonsense*.

Some may possibly say, "It is not necessary that Christ should of himself have wisdom and power sufficient for the work of creation; but that, nevertheless, God might work by him in that business, as he did in his miracles on earth; Christ speaking the word, or using some indifferent action (such as anointing the eyes of the blind man) and God producing the effect."

The two cases, however, are essentially different. That Christ, or any other prophet, should be able to foretel what God would do (which, in fact, is all that they pretended to) was necessary, as a proof of their divine mission; whenever there was a propriety in God's having intercourse with men, by means of a man like them-

selves. But what reason can there even be *imagined* why God, intending to make a world *by his own immediate power*, should first create an angel, or a man, merely to give the word of command, whenever he should bid him to do so; when, by the supposition, there was no other being existing to learn any thing from it?

Besides, a being *naturally incapable* of doing any thing cannot properly be said to be an *instrument* by which it is done. I use a *pen* as an instrument in writing, because a pen is naturally fitted for the purpose, and I could not write without one. But if, besides a pen, without which I could not write, I should take a *flute*, and blow on it every time that I took my pen in hand in order to write, and should say that I chose to write with such an *instrument*, I should lay myself open to ridicule. And yet such an instrument of creation would this hypothesis make Christ to have been.

I must take it for granted, therefore, that Christ would never have been employed in the work of creation, if he had not been *originally endued* with power sufficient for  
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the work. In that case, without the communication of any new powers, or any more immediate agency of God, he would be able to execute whatever was appointed him. Thus, Abraham, having a natural power of *walking* could go wherever God ordered him; and a prophet, having the power of *speech*, could deliver to others whatever God should give him in charge to say. Any other hypothesis appears to me to be inadmissible.

Such being the hypothesis that the Arians have to defend, they ought certainly to look well to the arguments they produce for it. The greater, and the more alarming, any doctrine is, the clearer ought to be the evidence by which it is to be supported. I do not in this work undertake to consider particular passages of scripture; but I have shewn that the *general tenor* of it, as well as considerations from *reason*, are highly unfavourable to the Arian hypothesis, and it will be seen, in the course of this work, that it has as little support from *history*.

## SECTION VI.

*Of the Argument against the Pre-existence of Christ from the Materiality of Man; and of the Use of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

I Might have urged another kind of argument against both the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, viz. from the doctrine of the *materiality of man*, which I presume has been sufficiently proved in my *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*. I have there shewn that there is no more *reason* why a man should be supposed to have an immaterial principle within him, than that a dog, a plant, or a magnet, should have one; because in all these cases, there is just the same difficulty in imagining any connexion between the *visible matter*, of which they consist, and the *invisible powers*, of which they are possessed. If *universal concomitance* be the foundation of all our reasoning concerning causes and effects, the organized brain of a man must be deemed to be the  
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proper *seat*, and immediate *cause* of his sensation and thinking, as much as the inward structure of a magnet, whatever that be, is the cause of its power of attracting iron.

The most inanimate parts of nature are possessed of *powers* or *properties*, between which and what we see and feel of them, we are not able to perceive any connexion whatever. There is just as much connexion between the principles of *sensation* and *thought* and the brain of a man, as between the powers of a magnet and the iron of which it is made, or between the principle of gravitation and the matter of which the earth and the sun are made; and whenever we shall be able to deduce the powers of a magnet from the other properties of iron, we may perhaps be able to deduce the powers of sensation and thought from the other properties of the brain.

This is a very short and plain argument, perfectly consonant to all our reasoning in philosophy. It is conclusive against the doctrine of *a soul*, and consequently against the whole system of pre-existence. If Peter, James, and John, had no pre-

existent state, it must be contrary to all analogy to suppose Jesus to have pre-existed. His being a prophet, and having a power of working miracles, can make no just exception in his favour; for then every preceding prophet must have pre-existed.

I think I have also proved in my *Disquisitions*, that the doctrine of a *soul*, as a substance distinct from the body, and capable of being happy or miserable when the body is in the grave, was borrowed from Pagan philosophy, that it is totally repugnant to the system of revelation, and unknown in the scriptures; which speak of no reward for the righteous, or punishment for the wicked before the general resurrection, and the coming of Christ to judge the world.

I might therefore have urged that, since the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence is contrary to reason, and was never taught by Christ or his apostles, it could not have been the faith of their immediate disciples, in the first ages of christianity. This argument will have its weight with those who reject the doctrine of a soul, and make them look with suspicion upon any pretended  
proof

proof of the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence, and of its having been the faith of the apostolical age, as well as their previous persuasion that such is not the doctrine of the scriptures. And since all the three positions are capable of independent proof, the urging of them is not *arguing in a circle*, but the adducing of proper collateral evidence.

I would conclude this *Introduction*, with advising the advocates for the doctrine of the trinity, to consider what there is in it that can recommend it as a part of a system of religious truth. All that can be said for it, is that the doctrine, however improbable in itself, is necessary to explain some particular texts of scripture; and that if it had not been for those particular texts, we should have found no *want* of it. For there is neither any fact in nature, nor any one purpose of morals (which are the object and end of all religion) that requires it.

Is not one self-existent almighty, infinitely wise, and perfectly good being, fully equal to the production of all things,



and also to the support and government of the worlds which he has made? A second person in the godhead cannot be really wanted for *this* purpose as far as we can conceive.

Whatever may be meant by the *redemption of the world*, is not the being who made it equal to that also? If his creatures offend him, and by repentance and reformation become the proper objects of his forgiveness, is it not more natural to suppose that he has, *within himself*, a power of forgiving them, and of restoring them to his favour, without the strange expedient of another person, fully equal to himself, condescending to animate a human body, and dying for them? We never think of any familiar expedient in order to forgive, with the greatest propriety and effect, offences committed by our children against ourselves.

Whatever be supposed to be the use of *a third person* in the trinity, is not the influence of the first person sufficient for that also? The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was to enable them to work miracles.

miracles. But when our Saviour was on earth, *the Father* within him, and acting by him, did the same thing.

Why then, should any person be so desirous of retaining such a doctrine as this of the trinity, which he must acknowledge, has an uncouth appearance, has always confounded the best reason of mankind, and drives us to the doctrine of *inexplicable mysteries*; to the great offence of Jews, Mahometans, and unbelievers in general, without some urgent necessity? Of two difficulties we are always authorised to chuse the least; and why should we risk the whole of christianity, for the sake of so unnecessary and undesirable a part.

Let those then who are attached to the doctrine of the trinity, try whether they cannot hit upon some method or other of reconciling a few particular texts, not only with common sense, but also with the general and the obvious tenor of the scriptures themselves. In this, they will, no doubt, find some difficulty at first, from the effect of early impressions, and association of ideas; but

but an attention to the true idiom of the scripture language, with such helps as they may easily find for the purpose, will satisfy them that the doctrine of the trinity furnishes no proper clue to the right understanding of these texts, but will only serve to mislead them.

In the mean time, this doctrine of the trinity wears so disagreeable an aspect, that I think every reasonable man must say with the excellent Archbishop Tillotson with respect to the Athanasian creed "I wish we were well rid of it." This is not setting up reason against the scriptures, but reconciling reason with the scriptures, and the scriptures with themselves. On any other scheme, they are irreconcilably at variance.

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T H E  
HISTORY OF OPINIONS  
CONCERNING  
C H R I S T.

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B O O K I.

THE HISTORY OF OPINIONS WHICH PRE-  
CEDED THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVI-  
NITY OF CHRIST, AND WHICH PRE-  
PARED THE WAY FOR IT.

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C H A P T E R I.

*Of those who are called Apostolical Fathers.*

**I**T must, I think, have been evident from the considerations suggested in the preceding *Introduction*, that the doctrines of the divinity and pre-existence of Christ, were not taught in the *scriptures*. But as great stress has been laid upon them in later ages, it is of some moment to trace both *when*, and *in what manner* they were introduced.

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With respect to the latter of these circumstances, I think I shall be able to give my readers abundant satisfaction, but with respect to the precise *time* when, or the particular *persons* by whom, they were introduced, there is less certainty to be had. This, however, is of no great consequence, it being sufficient to shew that they came in from some *foreign source*, and after the age of the apostles, which accounts for their not noticing the doctrines at all.

The oldest writer in whose works these doctrines are unquestionably found is Justin Martyr, who wrote about A. D. 140. But some traces of them are to be seen in our present copies of the writings of those who are called *apostolical Fathers*, from their having lived in the time of the apostles, and being therefore supposed to retain their doctrines, especially as they were not men of a philosophical education. It would certainly be a considerable argument in favour of those doctrines, if they had been *certainly* held by such men; but this can by no means be proved. For it is to be lamented that, few as these apostolical Fathers

thers are, their works are not come down to us as they wrote them, or rather, except a single epistle of Clemens Romanus, which contains no such doctrines as those of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ, the works that are ascribed to them are almost entirely spurious, and the time of their composition is not easily ascertained. I shall make a few observations on all of them that contain any trace of the doctrines above mentioned. They are the supposed works of Barnabas, Hermas, and Ignatius.

Though I am well satisfied that the only genuine epistle of Clemens Romanus contains no such doctrine as that of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ, yet, because it has been pretended that the latter, at least, is found there, I shall produce the passage which has been alledged for this purpose, and make a few remarks upon it.

“ For Christ is theirs who are humble,  
 “ and not who exalt themselves over his  
 “ flock. The sceptre of the majesty of  
 “ God, our Lord Jesus Christ, came not in  
 “ the show of pride and arrogance, though  
 “ he could have done so, but with hu-  
 “ mility,

“military, as the Holy Spirit had before  
“spoken concerning him\*.”

This passage, however, is easily explained, by supposing that Clemens alluded to Christ's coming as a *public teacher*, when, being invested with the power of working miracles, he never made any ostentatious display of it, or indeed ever exerted it for his own benefit in any respect.

But it has been said that the *context* determines the coming of Christ, of which Clemens speaks to be from a pre-existent state. “He came not,” says Clemens, “in  
“the pomp of pride and arrogance, al-  
“though he had it in his power, but in  
“humility, as the Holy Spirit spoke con-  
“cerning him.—To determine what this  
“humility is, Clemens immediately goes  
“on to cite the prophecies which describe  
“the Messiah's low condition. The hu-  
“military, therefore, of an ordinary condi-

\* Ταπεινόφρονων γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκ ἐπαίρομενων ἐπὶ τὸ ποιμνίον αὐτοῦ. Τὸ σκηπτήριον τῆς μεγάλας συνῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς, οὐκ ἦλθεν ἐν κομπῶν ἀλαζονείας, οὐδὲ ὑπερηφανίας, καὶ ἵπὲρ δυνάμεως, ἀλλὰ ταπεινόφρονων, καθὼς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐλάλησεν. Sect. 16.

“tion, is that in which it is said the Mes-  
 “siah came. The pomp, therefore, of a  
 “high condition, is the pomp in which  
 “it is said he came not, although he had  
 “it in his power to come. The expressions,  
 “therefore, clearly imply that our Lord,  
 “’ere he came, had the power to choose  
 “in what condition he would be born.”

But, if we consider the prophecies which Clemens quotes, we shall find them to be not such as describe the circumstances of the *birth* of Christ, but only those of his *public life* and *death*; the principal of them being, Is. liii. which he quotes almost at full length. This is certainly favourable to the supposition, that when Christ was in public life, he made no ostentatious display of the extraordinary powers with which he was invested, and before he entered upon it, preferred a low condition to that of a great prince.

The more ancient reading of Jerom is evidently favourable to this interpretation of the passage. He read *παντα δυναμενος*, *having all power*, which naturally alludes to the great power of which he became possessed  
 after



after the descent of the Spirit of God upon him at his baptism.

As to the phrase *coming*, it is used to express *the mission of any prophet*, and it is applied to John the Baptist as well as to Christ, of which the following passages are examples. Matt. xi. 18, 19. *John came neither eating nor drinking, &c. The Son of man came eating and drinking, &c.* i. e. not locally from heaven, but as other prophets came from God. Christ says of John, Matt. xxi. 32. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness.* John the evangelist, also says of him, John i. 7. *The same came for a witness, &c.*

Admitting that some one circumstance in the prophecies which Clemens quotes, rigorously interpreted, should allude to the birth of Christ (though I see no reason to think so) we are not authorized to conclude that Clemens attended to that in particular, but to the general scope of the whole, which is evidently descriptive of his public life only.

In the second section of this epistle we find the phrase *the sufferings of God*; but

this is language so exceedingly shocking, and unscriptural, that it is hardly possible to think that it could be used by any writer so near to the time of the apostles; and Junius, who was far from having my objection to it, was of opinion that the whole passage was much corrupted, and that, instead of *παθηματα αυτου* i. e. *his*, we ought to read *παθηματα αυτων*.

Whatever may be thought of this epistle by any of the moderns, it appears that, after the council of Nice, it was not thought to be favourable to the orthodoxy of those times. Photius, in his account of it, says that, it is liable to censure for three things, the last of which is, that “ speaking of our high-priest and master Jesus Christ, he did not make use of expressions sufficiently lofty, and becoming a God, though he no where openly blasphemes him\*.”

Of the writings of the other apostolical Fathers, the epistle of Barnabas would cer-

\* *Οτι αρχιμερα κ' προσειπεν τον κυριου ημων Ιησουν χριστον εξονομαζων, ουδε τας θεοπροπειας κ' υπερβυλιερας αφηκε περι αυτου φωνας. εμνη ενδ' απαρακαλυπτως αυτον υδαμη εν τειλοις βλασφημει.* biblioth. ca. p. 306.

tainly be entitled to the greatest consideration, if it was genuine; but it is almost certainly spurious, and unquestionably interpolated, besides, that the time in which it was written cannot be ascertained. Probably, however, it is not very ancient. My observations on this subject will be chiefly copied from the learned Jeremiah Jones; who, being a believer in the doctrine of the trinity, cannot be excepted against as an unfair judge in this case.

That the writer of this epistle was not Barnabas, the companion of Paul, who was a Jew, but some Gentile, appears, he says, from the constant opposition between the Jews and the Gentiles in the course of the work, and from the writer always ranking himself with the latter\*. It is also evident from there being no Hebraisms in the style of the work, and from its being written after the destruction of Jerusalem. For he speaks of the temple as being then destroyed †, and it is highly improbable that Barnabas should have survived that event.

\* Jones on the Canon, vol. I. p. 526.

† Sect. 16.

That this epistle was not, in early times, considered as the genuine production of Barnabas, the companion of Paul, appears from its not being found in any of the catalogues of the canonical books of the New Testament\*. It is, likewise, almost certain that this epistle could not be written by Barnabas, or indeed any respectable writer, from the extreme weakness and absurdity of many parts of it, especially from his finding in the two first letters of the name of *Jesus*, and the figure of the *cross*, the number 318, which he says, was the number that Abraham circumcised (but which was the number of those that Abraham armed, in order to pursue the kings who had plundered Sodom) T, which makes the figure of the cross being 300, in the Greek method of notation, and I H 18. This curiosity he speaks of as having been imparted to him by divine inspiration, and as certain a truth as any that he had divulged †.

\* Jones on the Canon, vol. I. p. 534.

† Δύο ἐν τῷ μὲν Ἰησοῦ ἐν ταῖς δύοσι γραμμασί, χ' ἐν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ. Οὐδὲν, ὅτι μὴ ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ διόραται τῆς διδασχῆς αὐτῆς θύμνος ἐν ἡμῶν. Οὐδὲν ὑπομιμνήσκον ἡμᾶς ἀπ' ἡμῶν λόγων. ἀλλὰ αὐτὰ, ὅτι ἀξίαι εἰσι ἡμῶν. Scd. 9. p. 30.

The author of this epistle carries his allegorizing of the writings of Moses so far as to assert that it was not his intention to forbid the use of any meats as unclean, but only to signify, by his prohibiting the flesh of certain animals, to avoid the dispositions for which they are remarkable. Mr. Jones proceeds to mention ten instances of mistakes and falsehoods in this epistle of Barnabas, and says that it would be easy to instance as many more.

The age of this epistle cannot be clearly ascertained. It is not mentioned by Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus, or Tertullian; but it is quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus. It is not, therefore, certain that this epistle is older than Justin Martyr, and therefore, it is of little consequence whether the writer held the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, or not.

At whatever time this epistle was written, it is evidently interpolated. Two passages in the Greek, which assert the pre-existence of Christ, are omitted in the ancient Latin version of it. And can it be supposed

supposed that that version was published in an age in which such an omission was likely to be made? Both the interpolations are in sect. 6. where we now read thus; “For the scripture says concerning us, as he says, to the Son. Let us make man according to our image, and our likeness\*.” But the ancient Latin version corresponding to this passage is simply this, “As says the scripture, Let us make man, &c. †”

Again, in the same section, after quoting from Moses, *Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth*, the Greek copy has *These things to the Son ‡*; but in the old Latin version the clause is wholly omitted; and, certainly, there is no want of it, or of the similar clause in the former passage, with respect to the general object of the writer. These appear to me pretty evident marks of interpolation.

In another passage, God is represented as speaking to the Son on *the day before the*

\* Λεγει γαρ η γραφη περι ημων, ως λεγει τω υιω, ποισωμεν κατ' εικονα κ' καθ' ομοιωσιν ημων, τον ανθρωπον.

† Sic ut dicit scriptura, faciamus hominem:

‡ Ταυτα προς τον υιον.

*making of the world*\*; but this is in that part of the epistle of which the original is lost, and it is by no means improbable, that this version may have been interpolated, as well as the original, and for the same reasons.

The passage that looks the least like an interpolation, and which yet speaks of Christ as pre-existing, is one in which he is represented as regulating the Jewish ritual, and having a view to himself in the frame of it. Speaking of the obligation of the priests to fast, he says, "This the Lord ordered because he himself was to offer for our sins the vessel of his spirit, and also that the type by Isaac, who was to have been offered, might be fulfilled †." He also gives it as a reason, why the priests only should eat the inwards, not washed with vinegar, that "he knew that they would give him vinegar mixed with gall to drink, to shew that he was to suffer

\* Die ante constitutionem seculi, *ibid.* 5. p. 61.

† Ενετειλατο κυριος · επει και αυτος των ημετερων αμαρτιων ημελλε σκευος τε πνευματος προσφερειν θυσιαν · να κ' ο τυπος προσενομενος επι Ισαακ, τε προσενεχθειλος επι το θυσιαστηριον, τελεσθη. *ibid.* 7. p. 21.

“for them\*.” A little alteration in the words of this passage would make it speak of God as ordering this with a view to Christ. As it stands, however, it certainly conveys the idea of the pre-existence of Christ, and of his having been the framer of the Jewish constitution. But what certain inference can be drawn from this, when it is considered that the work was not written by the companion of Paul, and that it cannot be proved to be older than the writings of Justin Martyr?

The supposed author of the next piece, which contains the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, is HERMAS, mentioned in the conclusion of Paul's epistle to the Romans. His work, entitled the *Shepherd*, is quoted by Irenæus, though not by name. The sentence which he cites is as follows; “The scripture, therefore, well says, in the first place believe that there is one God, who created and established all things,

\* Προς τι ; επειδη̄ η̄με, ειδον, υπερ̄ αμαρτιων̄ μελλοντᾱ τε̄ λαο̄ τε̄ προσφερειν̄ την̄ σαρκᾱ μου, μελλεῑε̄ ποιησειν̄ χοστην̄ μελᾱ ο̄ξυς.  
 Επειδη̄, ολῑ δεῑ αῡλων̄ παρειν̄ υπερ̄ αῡλων̄. Sect. 7. p. 21.



“making them out of nothing\*,” which is found in Hermas †. But we have only a Latin translation of Hermas, and, therefore, cannot be quite sure that the words were the same. The *sense* of them is certainly found in what are properly called *the scriptures*, and I do not know that Irenæus ever quotes any other book by this title, except those which we now characterize in that manner. He quotes no other author, I believe, without mentioning either his name, or some title, or circumstance, sufficiently descriptive of him.

Though this book of Hermas is quoted with respect by some of the more early Fathers, it is treated with contempt by the later ones, as Le Clerc, who thought it genuine, observes ‡. Tertullian says of this work of Hermas, “it is rejected as spurious by all the

\* Καλως εν ειπεν η γραφη η λεγουσα · Πρωτον παντων ποιησον θεος εις εν ο θεος, ο τα παντα κτισας, κη καθαρισας, κη ποιησας εκ τε μη ουλος εις το ειναι τα παντα. Lib. 4. chap. 37. p. 330.

† Primum omnium, crede quod unus est Deus, qui omnia creavit, & consummavit, & ex nihilo omnia fecit. Lib. 2. M. 1. p. 85.

‡ Hist. Ec. A. D. 69. p. 469.

“councils”

“councils of the churches \* ;” and it was declared to be apocryphal under Pope Gelasius, A. D. 494. It is, indeed, a work highly unworthy of the apostolical age, the contents of it being weak and foolish in the extreme, to say nothing of its pretended *visions*, which looks as if the writer designed to impose them upon the world for something else than his own inventions. Those who deny the authenticity of this work, generally ascribe it to another Hermas, or Hermes, brother of Pope Pius, about the year 146, which is after the time of Justin Martyr.

The pre-existence of Christ is certainly referred to in this work. For the writer, speaking of an old rock and a new gate, and being asked the reason of it, says, “it represents the Son of God, who is older than the creation, so that he was present with the Father when the world was made †.” He also says, “the name of the

\* Ab omni concilio ecclesiarum inter apocrypha et falsa judicatur. De Pudicitia, cap. 10. p. 563.

† Petra hæc, et porta quid sunt? Audi, inquit: Petra hæc, & porta, Filius Dei est. Quonam pacto, inquam,

“Son of God is great and immense, and  
 “the whole world is sustained by it\*.”  
 But this language might be figurative.  
 However, the uncertainty, to say the least,  
 with respect to the age of this work, is suf-  
 ficient to overthrow the authority of the  
 evidence which it might furnish for the  
 early date of doctrine of the pre-existence  
 of Christ, without having recourse to *inter-*  
*polation*, which few writings of so early an  
 age have escaped.

The only writer besides these, that I have  
 any occasion to mention, is IGNATIUS, bis-  
 hop of Antioch, who, on his journey to  
 Rome, where he suffered martyrdom under  
 Trajan, wrote several epistles; and many bear-  
 ing his name are now extant. But of these, a  
 great part are universally allowed to be spu-  
 rious, and the rest are so much interpolated,  
 that they cannot be quoted with safety for

quam, Domine, petra vetus est, parta autem nova! Audi,  
 inquit, insipiens, & intellige. Filius quidem Dei omni  
 creatura antiquior est, ita ut in consilio Patri suo adfuerit  
 ad condendam creaturam. Lib. 3. sect. 12. p. 115.

\* Nomen Filii Dei, magnum & immensum est, & to-  
 tus ab eo sustentatur orbis. Lib. 3. sect. 14. p. 116:

any

any purpose. Dr. Lardner, who thinks that the smaller epistles are *in the main* genuine, says\*, “ if there be only some few sentiments and expressions which seem inconsistent with the true age of Ignatius, it is more reasonable to suppose them to be additions, than to reject the epistles themselves entirely; especially in this scarcity of copies which we labour under. As the interpolations of the larger epistles are plainly the work of some Arian, so even the smaller epistles may have been tempered with by the Arians, or the orthodox, or both, though I do not affirm that there are in them any considerable corruptions or alterations.”

Salmasius, Blondel, and Daillé, are decided that all the epistles are spurious; and Le Sueur, after having given an account of the whole matter, says, that the last of them, viz. Mr. Daillé, has clearly proved that the first, or small collection of Ignatius's epistles was forged about the beginning of the fourth century, or two hun-

\* *Credibility*, vol. I. p. 154.

dred years after the death of Ignatius; and that the second, or larger collection, was made at the beginning of the sixth century.

Ignatius not being quoted by Eusebius, or the writer whose work he cites, among ancient authorities for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, is alone a sufficient proof that no passage favourable to it was to be found in the epistles of Ignatius in his time.

Jortin says, " Though the short epistles " are on many accounts preferable to the " larger, yet I will not affirm that they " have undergone no alteration at all \*." Beaufobre thinks that the purest of Ignatius's epistles have been interpolated †.

For my own part, I scruple not to say, that there never were more evident marks of interpolation in any writings than are to be found in these *genuine epistles*, as they are called, of Ignatius: though I am willing to allow, on re-considering them, that, exclusive of manifest interpolation, there may be a ground work of antiquity in them.

\* Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1. p. 361.

† Histoire de Manichéisme, vol. 1. p. 378:

The famous passage in Josephus concerning Christ is not a more evident interpolation than many in these epistles of Ignatius.

A passage in these epistles on which much stress has been laid, as referring to the pre-existence of Christ, is the following; "There is one physician, fleshly and " spiritual, begotten and unbegotten, in the " flesh made God, in immortal life eternal, " both of Mary and of God, first suffering " and then impassible \*." Theodoret read the passage, γεννητός ἐξ ἀγεννητός, " begotten of " him that was unbegotten," and in other respects this passage is neither clear nor decisive.

It will weigh much with many persons in favour of the genuineness of the pieces ascribed to Barnabas, Hermas, and Ignatius, that Dr. Lardner was inclined to admit it. But it must be observed, and I would do it with all possible respect for so fair and candid a writer, that the object of his work might, unperceived by himself,

\* Εἰς ἑαυτὸς ἐστὶν, σαρκῖνος τε καὶ πνευματικὸς, γεννητός καὶ ἀγεννητός, ἐν σαρκὶ γενομένος θεός, ἐν ἀθανάτῳ ζῶν ἀσώρευτος, καὶ ἐκ Μαρίας καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ, πρῶτον παθὴν καὶ τότε ἀπαθὴν. Ad. Eph. sect. 7. p. 13.

bias him a little in favour of their genuineness; as their evidence was useful to his purpose, which was to prove that of the books of the New Testament, by the quotation of them in early writers. Other men as learned as Dr. Lardner, and even firm believers in the doctrines of the pre-existence and the divinity of Christ, have not scrupled to pronounce all the works above-mentioned to be spurious. These circumstances considered, the reader must form his own judgment of the value of any testimony produced from them.

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## C H A P. II.

### *Of the Principles of the Oriental Philosophy.*

**I**N order clearly to understand the nature and origin of those corruptions of christianity which now remain, it will be proper to consider those which took their rise in a more early period, and which bore some

Some relation to them, though they are now extinct, and therefore, on that account, are not, of themselves, deserving of much notice. The doctrine of the *deification of Christ*, which overspread the whole christian world, and which is still the prevailing opinion in all christian countries (but which is diametrically opposite to the genuine principles of christianity, and the whole system of revealed religion) was preceded by that system of doctrines which is generally called *Gnosticism*. For these principles were introduced in the very age of the apostles, and constituted the only heresy that we find to have given any alarm to them, or to the christian world in general, for two or three centuries.

That these principles of the Gnostics were justly considered in a very serious light, we evidently perceive by the writings of the apostles. For that the doctrines which the apostles reprobated were the very same with those which were afterwards ascribed to the Gnostics, cannot but be evident to every person who shall compare them in the most superficial manner.

The



The authority of the apostles, which, in all its force, was directly pointed against the principles of these Gnostics, seems to have borne them down for a considerable time, so that they made no great figure till the reign of Adrian, in the beginning of the second century. But at that time, some persons of great eminence, and very distinguished abilities, having adopted the same, or very similar, principles, the sect revived, and in a remarkably short space of time, became very prevalent.

The principles of Gnosticism must be looked for in those of the philosophy of the times, especially that which was most prevalent in the East; and as much of this philosophy as is sufficient to explain the general principles of the Gnostics, is easily deduced from the accounts that we have of that heresy. Also the Greek philosophy, having been originally derived from that of the orientals, and having always retained the same fundamental doctrines, with no very considerable variations, and those easily distinguished, is another guide to us in our investigation of this subject.

But

But we have happily preserved to us one work of a singular construction, in which the principles of this philosophy are represented such as they were before they were incorporated into christianity, by a writer tolerably near to the time of the first promulgation of it, at least as near to it as any other certain account of the principles of the Gnostics, except what may be collected from the New Testament itself. And what makes this work an *unique* of its kind, and therefore more deserving of our notice, is that it appears to have been written by a person who was unquestionably an unitarian; whereas every other account that is now extant of the principles of the Gnostics, or of those from which they were derived, is from persons who were either trinitarians, or had adopted those principles which afterwards led to the doctrine of the trinity.

The work I mean, is the *Clementine Homilies*, written probably about the time of Justin Martyr; and it is pretty remarkable, that the author of the *Clementines*, as the work is generally called, does not appear to have known any thing of Justin's doc-

trine of the *personification of the logos*, which was borrowed from Platonism; and yet in the compass of his work there is an account of every other system that made any considerable figure in those times. The author himself appears to have been well acquainted with philosophy, and has evidently borrowed from it a variety of opinions, which are sufficiently absurd. It may, therefore, be presumed, that this writer, who was a man of learning and ability, well acquainted with the different systems that prevailed in his time, and with the arguments by which they were supported, had never heard of any such doctrine; and that no questions relating to religion were much agitated in his time by christians, except against the *heathens* on the one hand, and the *Gnostics* on the other. Of all these a very full detail is given in this work, in which speakers are introduced on both sides, who exhibit in the best light the principles of their respective systems.

It is possible that this writer might be mistaken in his account of the opinions of persons who lived about a century before  
his

his time, and it is evident he has ascribed to Peter several opinions which he could not have entertained; but he would naturally (since he must have wished to gain credit to his *theological romance*, for such his work properly is) endeavour to give to every personage introduced into it such opinions and arguments as he thought would pass for theirs. Since, however, this is the only account that we have of the tenets of those oriental philosophers so near to the time in which their doctrines were most in vogue, I shall give a separate view of them as they are exhibited in this work; and it will be seen, that the principles here ascribed to Simon Magus, were in general the very same with those which were afterwards entertained by the christian Gnostics, though Simon is not here represented as a christian, but an open opposer of christianity.

Beaufobre says that this work is a well written romance, composed by a christian philosopher who wished to publish his theology under the names of Peter and Clement\*.

\* Histoire de Manicheisme, vol. I. p. 461.

Cotelerius, the editor, says, that “ though  
 “ it abounds with trifles and errors, which  
 “ had their source in a half christian phi-  
 “ losophy and heresy, especially that of  
 “ the Ebionites, it may be read with ad-  
 “ vantage, both on account of the elegance  
 “ of the style, and the various learning that  
 “ it contains, and likewise for the better  
 “ understanding the doctrine of the first  
 “ heretics\*.”

It was an opinion very prevalent among christians, that “ Simon Magus” was the “ father of all heresy,” and it is probable, that the opinions which he maintained, being adopted by christians, were the true source of those heresies which went under the general name of Gnosticism. Thus much may be learned from the work before us, in which Peter is represented as saying, “ There will be, as the Lord said,

.. \* Et vero quædamus *Clementina*, licet nugis, licet erroribus scatent, a semichristiana philosophia, et hæresi, præcipue Ebionitica, profectis, non sine fructu tamen legentur, tum propter elegantiam sermonis, tum multiplicis doctrinæ causa, tum denique ad melius cognoscenda primarum Hæresion dogmata. *Preface.*

“ false

“ false apostles, false prophets, heresies, pre-  
 “ tensions to power, which, as I conjec-  
 “ ture, have their origin from Simon, who  
 “ blasphemes God, and who will concur  
 “ with him in speaking these things against  
 “ God\*.”

This Simon is represented as having sup-  
 planted one Dositheus, who preceded him  
 as a teacher of the same doctrines †. The  
 successor of Simon was Menander, whose  
 disciple was Saturninus of Antioch, and he  
 was followed by Basilides of Alexandria ‡.  
 These were the first christian Gnostics.

The age of Simon Magus is fixed by the  
 history of the book of Acts, in which  
 mention is made of his interview with  
 Peter. The severe reproof given him by  
 Peter, might be supposed to have silenced  
 him; but he is represented as being inde-

\* Εσθλαι γαρ, ως ο κυριος ειπεν, ψευδαποστολοι, ψευδεις προφηται,  
 αιρεσεις, φιλαρχιαι: αι τινες, ως τοχαζομαι, απο τε του θεου βλασφη-  
 μησιος Σιμωνος την αρχην λαβησαι, εις τα αυτα τω Σιμωνη καλα τε  
 θεα λεγειν συνεργησασιν. Hom. 16. sect. 21. p. 729.

† Hom. 2. sect. 24. p. 627.

‡ Euseb. Hist. lib. 4: cap. 7. p. 147.

fatigable in teaching his opinions afterwards. Theodoret speaks of him as sowing his heretical thorns when Paul was writing his second epistle to Timothy\*.

The great principles of the oriental philosophy, as far as they affected christianity were these, viz. That matter is the source of all evil, that the supreme being was not the maker of the world, that men had souls separate from their bodies, and that these souls had pre-existed. And it must be owned that the reasoning by which the authors of this philosophy had been led to adopt these principles were very specious. It was a fundamental maxim with the oriental philosophers, as it also was with Plato, who borrowed from them, that the supreme being is perfectly *good*, and therefore that he could not be the author of any thing *evil*. In this work Simon is represented as saying, “ If God be the author  
“ only of what is good, we must conclude  
“ either that evil has some other origin, or

\* Σίμων ηρξάτο κατ' ἐμείνον τον καιρον τας αἱρετικας καλασθησεις  
αυτουδης. In 2 Tim. ii. 8. Opera, vol. 3. p. 497.

“ that it is unoriginated\*.” It is on this subject that he is represented as speaking with the greatest confidence, saying to Peter, “ Since you acknowledge, from the “ scriptures, that there is an evil being, tell “ me how he was made, if he was made, “ and by whom, and for what purpose †.”

But as it is evident that there is much evil in the world, and the principles of it seem to be interwoven into the very constitution of nature, these philosophers concluded that the visible universe must have had some other author, who must either have been derived from the Supreme Being, or have been eternal and underived. The latter, however, was so bold an hypothesis, that it does not seem to have been adopted very early. At least, the more general opinion was, that matter only had been eternal, and that its nature was such, as that nothing perfectly good could be made out of

\* Ουκην ει ο θεος μονων των καλων αιτιος εστιν, τα λοιπα τι εστιν νοεν, η ολι το πωτηρον ελερα τι εγεννησεν αρχην, η αρ' αγεννητον εστιν. Hom. 19. sect. 12. p. 747.

† Επει εν ευγνωμοστας ομολογησας ειναι του πωτηρον, απο γραφων, κ' λεγε το πως γεγενεν, ειπερ γεγενεν, κ' υπο τινος, κ' δια τι. Ibid. sect. 3. p. 744.



it; so that, however it might be modified by the Supreme Being, every system into which it entered must necessarily contain within itself the seeds of evil.

In the same system it was generally supposed that all intelligence had only one source, viz. the divine mind; and to help out the doctrine concerning the origin of evil, it was imagined, that though the Divine Being himself was essentially and perfectly good, those intelligences, or spirits, which were derived from him, and especially those which were derived from them, were capable of depravation. It was farther imagined, that the derivation of these inferior intelligent beings from the supreme was by a kind of *efflux*, or *emanation*, a part of the substance being detached from the rest, but capable of being absorbed into it again. To these intelligences, derived mediately or immediately from the divine mind, the authors of this system did not scruple to give the name of *gods*, thinking some of them capable even of creative power, that is, a power of modifying matter: for *creation out of nothing* was an idea that they never enter-

entertained. In this work Simon Magus supposes two of these inferior gods to have been sent out by the Supreme God, and that one of them made the visible world, and the other gave the law to the Jews\*.

As these divine intelligences were capable of animating the bodies of men, it was supposed that this was occasionally done by them, as well as that all souls had come into this world from a pre-existent state, and generally for the punishment of offences committed in that state. Simon himself claimed to be one of those superior powers, as it is likewise said, that he maintained his wife Helena to be another of them. We read, Acts viii. 9. that he said, that “he himself was some great one,” and the people said of him, ver. 10, *He is the great power of God.* In this work likewise, he claims to be a great *power*, *δυναμις*, even superior to the Being that made the

\* Σιμων σημερον καθα συνελαιξαιλο, ελομος εστιν απο των γραφων, επι παλαιων ελθων, αποδεικνυειν μη τειλον ειναι θεον ανωτατον. ος ερανον ειλισε, κηγην, κη παλαια εν αυλοις· αλλα αλλον τινα αγνωστον κη ανωτατον, ος εν απορητοις οντα θεον θεων· ος δυο επεμλε θεους· αφ ων ο μεν εις εστιν ο κοσμον κτιστας, ο δε ειςρος, ο τον νομον δες. Hom. 3. sect. 2. p. 634.

world ;

world; and he intimates, that he was *a Christ*, or a person *anointed*, or *set apart* for some great office, calling himself *εσως*, as if he should always continue, having no cause of corruption in himself \*. In another place he calls himself *the Son of God* †, meaning, probably, that he was some principal, or immediate emanation from the Supreme Being.

When, upon this ground, Simon would, for argument's sake, insinuate that Jesus Christ, being called *the Son of God*, and said to *proceed from him*, must therefore claim to be a god, Peter replied that, “ upon this “ principle, all souls, which are the breath “ of God, must be gods; and,” says he, “ if they must be called gods, what great “ matter is it for Christ to be a god in “ that sense, as he has no advantage over

\* Και φρεναδες θελειν νομιζεσθαι ανωτατη τις ειναι δυναμις, κ' αυτη τε του κοσμου κτισαντος θεος. ενιστε δε κ' χριστον εαυτον ανισσομενος, εγωια προσσαγορευει. ταυτη δε τη προσηγορια μεχρηται, ως δη γησομενος αιε, κ' αιαιαν φθορας. το σωμα πρεσειν, εκ εχων. κ' ητε θεου τον κτισαντα τον κοσμον, ανωτατεν ειναι λεγει. Hom. 2. sect. 22. p. 626.

† Συ δε κ' τα σαφως λεγομενα μη σηνιαν, υιον εαυτου ειπειν θελεις. Hom. 18. sect. 7. p. 739.

“ others,”

“others\*.” This, I would observe, is a very different kind of answer from what would have been given by a trinitarian, or one who had adopted the doctrine of the personification of the *logos*.

No other peculiar principles of Simon’s appear in this piece, except that he denied the resurrection †, which was also done by all the christian Gnostics afterwards. They had too bad an opinion of *matter*, and consequently of the *body*, which was composed of it, to think the resurrection a desirable thing.

It may not be possible to imagine every thing that might have been urged by the patrons of this oriental philosophy in its favour; but we may easily perceive in this work, that the principal sources of their mistakes were such as have been represented above, especially their fixed persuasion concerning the pure benevolence of the Supreme Being; considering what their

\* Εἰ δὲ προσφιδουμένων μὲν εἶσιν, καὶ αὐτοὺς θεοὺς εἶναι ἢ τί τιτύλο εἰς μέγα καὶ χρίτω, τῷ θεῷ λεγέσθαι; τίτυλο γὰρ εἶχει, οὐ καὶ πάντες εἰχρῶσιν.  
Hom. 16. sect. 16. p. 728.

† Οὐ νεκρὸς ἐγγυερθεὶς πύθεται. Hom. 2. sect. 22. p. 626.

idea of this pure benevolence was. For it was such as was incompatible with *justice*; so that the very admission that God was *just*, was with them a proof that he was not that *good* being whom they placed at the head of the universe.

In this work Simon says, “ It is the pro-  
 “ perty of men to be some good, and others  
 “ bad, but it belongs to God to be unmixed  
 “ good\*.” Again, he says, “ You must  
 “ say that the Creator either was a law-  
 “ giver, or not. If he was a law-giver, he  
 “ was just; but if just, he was not good;  
 “ and if so, Christ preached another god,  
 “ when he said, *There is none good but one,*  
 “ *that is God †.*”

Though Simon avowed himself an enemy to christianity, he nevertheless undertook to prove the truth of his system with respect to the maker of the world from the scrip-

\* Ἐὶ μὲν προσεστὶν ἀνθρώποις, τὸ κακοῦς εἶναι καὶ ἀγαθοῦς. τῷ δὲ θεῷ, τῷ ἀσυκρίτῳ ἀγαθῷ εἶναι. Hom. 19. sect. 11. p. 746.

† Αὐτῶς γοῦν τὸν διμυροῦν αὐτὸν καὶ νομοθετὴν φησὶ εἶναι, ἢ ἕχ'· εἰ μὲν ἔν νομοθετὴς ἐστὶν, δίκαιος τυγχάνει· δίκαιος δὲ ὢν, ἀγαθός ἐκ ἐστίν. εἰ δὲ ἕκ ἐστίν, ἕτερον ἐκῆρυσσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὸ λεγέειν· Μὴ με λέγε ἀγαθόν, ὁ γὰρ ἀγαθὸς εἰς ἐστίν, ὁ πατήρ ὁ ἐν τοῖς ἕρανῶς. Hom. 18. sect. 1, p. 737.

tures,

tures, as an *argument ad hominem* to Peter and the Jews; alledging, as a proof that there was another god besides the Supreme, the imperfections of Adam, who was made after the image of this god; his being punished by being cast out of paradise; God's saying, *Let us descend to see what is doing in Sodom; Let us cast out Adam, lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever*; his saying that *he repented of his making man*, that he smelled a sweet savour, and that he tempted Abraham\*.

\* Αὐτίκα γὰρ ὁ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν αὐτῆς γεγονώς Ἀδάμ καὶ τυφλῶ κλιθεῖται, καὶ γινώσκων ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακὰ ἐκ ἐχθρῶν παραδεδοῦμαι, καὶ παραβάτης εὕρισκῆναι, καὶ τὰ παραδείσια ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ δαυατῶ τιμωρεῖσθαι. ὁμοίως τε καὶ ὁ πλάσας αὐτὸν, ἐπεὶ μὴ πᾶν ἀχόθεν ἐλάσσει, ἐπὶ τῇ Σοδομῶν κατὰστροφῇ, λέγει δέσσει, καὶ κατὰσβαλεῖς ἰδόμενος εἰ κατὰ τὴν κραυγὴν αὐτῶν τὴν ἐρχομένην πρὸς μὲ συνελθεῖν· εἰ δὲ μὴ, ἵνα γινῶ καὶ ἀγνοεῖν αὐτῶν δεικνύσων. τοῦ δὲ εἰπεῖν περὶ τῆς Ἀδάμ· ἐκβάλλωμεν αὐτὸν, μήπως ἐπιείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτῆς ἀφῆται τὰ ξύλα τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ φαγῆ, καὶ ζῆσεια εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, τοῦ εἰπεῖν μήπως ἀγνοεῖ· τοῦ δὲ ἐπαγαγεῖν, μήπως φαγὼν ζῆσεια εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ φθῶσει. καὶ τὸ γεγραφεῖσθαι ὅτι ἐνεδυμνήθη ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐποίησεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον. καὶ μέλει νοεῖ, καὶ ἀγνοεῖ ————— καὶ τὸ γεγραφεῖσθαι, καὶ ὀσφραδῆ κυρίου ὀσμῆς εὐωδίας, εὐδὲς ἐστὶ, καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ κινήσει σαρκῶν παθῆσαι ἐκ ἀγαθῶν· τοῦ δὲ πειραθεῖν, ὡς γεγραπῆται, καὶ ἐπείρασεν κυρίῳ τὸν Ἀβραάμ, κακὰ, καὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς ὑπομοχθῆς ἀγνοεῖσθαι. Hom. 3. lect. 39. p. 642.

All these circumstances he thought to be proofs either of *imperfection, ignorance, envy, vice, or severity*, in the being who is stiled God, and who is supposed to be the maker and governor of the world; who, therefore could not be the supreme being, because he is omniscient, and also absolutely perfect and good.

As a proof that mention is made in the scriptures of there being more gods than one, and that the great God was not offended at it, Simon alledges God's saying, "Adam is become one of us." The serpent's saying, "Ye shall be as gods;" its being said, "Thou shalt not curse the gods, nor speak evil of the ruler of thy people\*." "The gods who have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish," &c. Which he says implied that there were other Gods who had made the heavens and the earth. "The Lord thy God, he is God of gods †." "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among

\* Exod. xxii. 28:

† Deut. x. 17.

" the

“the Gods. The Lord standeth in the  
“congregation of the Gods\*.”

He likewise pretended to bring proofs of his doctrine from the New Testament. Thus, in order to prove that there is another God besides him that is supremely good, Simon alledges Christ's saying *No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal him*; as if, before this time, the Father had been unknown to all. He also asserted, that Christ represents one God as a just and severe being, and not a good one †.

\* Εγω δε φημι τας πεπιστευμενας γραφας παρα Ιουδαίους πολλας λεγειν θεος, κ' μη χαλεπαινειν επι τελω του θεου, τω αυτω δια των γραφων αυτη πολλας θεος ειρημενα. — Ο μεν εν οφει εντων εσεδε ως θεοι, ως οντων θεων ειρημως φαινεται. ταυτη μαλλον η κ' θεος εμαρτυρησεν, ειπων, ιδε γεγονεν Αδαμ ως εις ημων. εως ο τας πολλας εντων οφει εναι θεος η εφευσαλο. παλιν τω γεγραφθαι θεος η κοσμολογησεις. — πολλας σημαινει θεος κ' αλλοτε, θεοι οι τον θρανον κ' την γην εκ επαιησαν απολεθωσαν. — κ' παλιν γεγραπται, κυριος ο θεος σε εως θεος των θεων. Και παλιν, τις ομοιος σοι κυριε εν θεοις κ' παλιν θεος θεων κυριος. κ' παλιν, ο θεος εστι εν συναγωγη θεων. Honi. 16. sect. 6. p. 725.

† Και εως τοις προ αυτη πασιν αγνωστος ην ο πατηρ. — Φοβερων και δικαιον συνιστοι θεον, λεγων. Μη φοβηθητε απο τε αποκλεισιν ενι το σωμα τη δε ψυχη μη δυναμενα τι ποιησαι. Φοβηθητε τον δυναμενον και



It cannot be worth while at this day to give a serious answer to such arguments as these; but it may not be amiss to shew in what manner, and on what principles, they were answered in the age in which they were urged. With respect to the general system of these philosophers, viz. that the supreme being, or the God of gods, can produce other beings who may be properly called *gods* by *generation*, the latter being as it were, the *sons* of the former, Peter says, “It is the property of the Father to be “unbegotten, and of the Son to be be- “gotten; but that which is begotten can- “not be compared with that which is un- “begotten, or self begotten.” Simon says, “Are they not the same on account of ge- “neration?” meaning probably, their being produced from the very substance of the Father. Peter answered, “He who is not “in all respects the same with any other

και σωμα κ' ψυχην εις την γεννησαν τα πωρος βαλειν . και λεγω υμιν ,  
 τειλον φοβηθητε . ——— Ο δε εκδικνυλα κ' αμειβομενον λεγου θεου ,  
 δικαιον αιλου τη φυσει συνιτησιν , κ' εκ αγαθου . Hom. 17. sect. 45.  
 p. 731.

“ cannot

“cannot be entitled to the same appellation\*.” He also says, according to the philosophy of the age, that “the souls of men are immortal, being from the breath of God, and therefore of the same substance with him, but that they are not therefore gods †.”

This is by no means such an answer as one of the orthodox Fathers would have made. On the contrary, they always pleaded the propriety of the *logos* being called *God*, and for the same reason that Simon here alledges, viz. his being *generated from God*, and therefore, of his being *God of God*, as it is expressed in the Nicene creed. In this work Peter is represented as being more scrupulous how he applied the term *God* “Wherefore,” says he, “above all things consider that

\* Προς τούτους δε, τὸ παῖδες το μὴ γεγενῆσθαι εἶναι, οὐκ εἶναι το γεγενῆσθαι· γεννηθὲν δὲ ἀγεννητὸν ἢ καὶ αὐτογεννητὸν καὶ συσκιωθέναι. καὶ ὁ Σίμων εἶπεν· εἰ καὶ τὴν γενέσθαι καὶ ταύτων εἶναι; καὶ ὁ Πέτρος εἶπεν· ὁ μὴ κατὰ πάντα το αὐτὸ ὡν τινι, τὰς αὐτὰς αὐτῶν πάσας εἶχεν προσωπεῖον καὶ δυναταί. Hom. 16. sect. 16. p.728.

† Ἄλλα καὶ τούτο μάθε. τὰ ἀνθρώπων σωματὰ ψυχὰς εἶχει ἀθάνατας, τὴν τὴν θεὸν ἠμφισβησάμενος· καὶ ἐκ τῆς θεοῦ προελθῆσαι, τῆς μὲν αὐτῆς ἰσῆς εἶναι, θεοὶ δὲ οὐκ εἰσιν. Ibid.

“ none reigns with him, nor is any one entitled to the appellation of *God* besides “ himself\*.”

Equally unlike the reasoning of the catholics is Peter’s reply to the arguments of Simon from the Old Testament. In answer to what he alledged from the phrase, *Let us make man*, viz. that “ two or more “ were implied, and not *one* only,” Peter says, “ It is one who said to his own “ wisdom, *Let us make man*. For this “ wisdom is his own Spirit, always rejoicing with him, and it is united as a “ soul to God, and is extended from him “ as a hand that maketh all things†.” According to the reasoning of this unitarian, God was only represented by Moses as holding a soliloquy with himself, and not as

\* Διο προ πάντων ενου, δι υδεις αυτω συναρχει, υδεις της αυτης ποιωνει ονομασιαις, τειλο ο δη λεγεται θεος. Hom. 3. sect. 37. p. 642.

† Και ειπεν ο θεος. ποιησωμεν ανθρωπον καθ εικονα και καθ ομοιωσιν ημετεραν. το, ποιησωμεν, δυο σημαινει, η πλειονας. πλων ηχ εναι. εις εστιν, ο τη αυτη σφρα ειπων. ποιησωμεν ανθρωπον. Η δε σοφια ωσπερ ιδιω πνευματι, αυτος αει συνεχαιρεν. ηνυλαι μεν ως ψυχη τα θεω. εκτεινεται δε απ αυτης, ως χειρ δημιουργου το παν. Hom. 16. sect. 12. p. 727.

speaking

speaking to another intelligent person, which the orthodox Fathers supposed. His comparing the wisdom of God to a hand extended from him, was agreeable to the ideas of all the philosophical unitarians of the early ages, as will be seen in its proper place.

With respect to the term *God*, Peter is represented as replying, that it is sometimes used in the scriptures in an inferior sense, so that angels, and even men, may be called Gods; but that this was far from amounting to the acknowledgment of such gods as Simon contended for. Peter alleges, that angels are sometimes called gods, and instances in him who spake in the bush, and him who wrestled with Jacob. He also observes that Moses is called a God to Pharaoh, though he was no more than a man. "To us," he says, "there is one God, who made all things, and governs all things, whose Son Christ is\*." And whereas Simon had insinuated that, accord-

\*. Ἡμῶν δὲ εἷς θεός, εἷς ὁ τὰς ἅλλας κτίσεις πεποιμένος, δημιουργῆσας τὰ πάντα: ἃ καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς υἱός. Hom. 16. sect. 14. p. 727.

ing to the rule laid down by Moses, to distinguish the prophets of the true God from those who should speak in the name of false gods, even though they should work miracles, Christ ought to have been rejected as a false prophet, or another god, Peter says, “ Our Lord never said that there was “ any other God besides him that made “ all things, nor did he ever call himself “ God; but he pronounced him blessed “ who called him *the Son of God*\*.”

Had not this curious piece of antiquity been imperfect, and even been broken off in the very midst of the principal disputation between Peter and Simon, we might have known more concerning the state of the reasoning between the unitarian christians, and the oriental philosophers†. In what

\* Ο κυριος ημων, εις θεος ειναι εφθεγγασθαι, παρα τον κλισαλα τα παπια, εις αυλον θεου ειναι αντιγορευσειν · υικυ δε θες, τς τα παπια διακοσμησαντ, τον ειποντα αυλον, ευλογως εμακαρισεν. Hom: 16. sect. 15. p. 728.

† It is probable, however, that we do not lose much by this mutilation, as the *Recognitions* are entire, and this work Dr. Lardner supposes to have been only another, and a later edition of the Homilies. He thinks so because it is more finished and artificial. Both the works, he thinks, were

manner, and on what principles, the orthodox christians reasoned upon these subjects, we have abundant information.

As this work is the only one that is universally allowed to be written by an unitarian, in so early a period\*, I shall conclude this article with citing from it a few more passages expressive of the unitarian principles. “The whole church,” he says, “may be compared to a large ship, “ which carries a great number of men, “ who are desirous of going to inhabit a “ city of some good state, through a violent “ tempest. Let the proprietor of this ship “ be God, and the governor” (or master) “ Christ, the steersman the bishop, the “ sailors the presbyters, &c. †” And Christ

were originally Ebionite, and therefore, that if there be any Arianism in them, it has been interpolated. *Credibility*, vol. 2, p. 812.

\* Beaufobre supposes that the author of *the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs* was an Ebionite, and this appears to have been written in a very early period: Others think it to have been the work of a Jew, and that it has been altered by a christian.

† Εοικει γαρ ολον το πρραγμα της εκκλησιας νηι μεγαλη, δια σφοδ-  
 ρε χειμωνος ανδρας φερων εν ποταμω τοπων ολης, και μων τινα  
 K 3 ἀγαθης;

is represented as joining with the rest in praying to God for a prosperous voyage\*.

The demiurgus of the Gnostics was not the supreme being, but an inferior one, and according to the catholics, it was the logos, or Christ; but in this work the supreme being himself is represented as the demiurgus, or the immediate creator of all things †.

The term *generation* was applied both by the Gnostics and by the orthodox to the Supreme Being; but this writer says, “To *beget* is the property of men, not of God ‡.”

All the unitarians of antiquity resolutely held what they called the *monarchy of the*

αγαθῆς βασιλείας πολλῶν οικειν θεούνας. ἐγὼ μὲν ἢν ὑμῖν ὁ ταύτης δεσπότης θεός, καὶ παρεικασθῶ, ὁ μὲν κυβερνήτης χριστῶ ὁ περιφρεὺς ἐπισκοπῶ, οἱ ναυταὶ πρεσβυτέρους, οἱ τοιχαρχοὶ διακονοῖς. οἱ ναυταλογοὶ τοῖς κατήχασιν, τοῖς ἐπιβάταις τῶν ἀδελφῶν πληθῶν, τῶ βιβῶ ὁ κόσμος, αἱ ἀλιπνοῖαι τοῖς πειρασμοῖς, οἱ δίωγμοὶ καὶ οἱ κινδῖνοι καὶ παρὰ Ἰουδαίαι θλιψαὶ τὰς τρικυμίας. Epist. sect. 14. p. 609.

\* Οἱ δὲ πάντες τῷ θεῷ περὶ τῆς ἡρίας πλεεῖν προσευχέσθωνται. Sect. 15. *ibid.*

† Ὁμῶς αὐτὸς μόνῳ δῆμιος ἀγγέλων καὶ πνευμάτων, βουλῆς νευματικῆς δημιουργήσας, ἐπλήσθη τῆς ἡρανης. Hom. 3. sect. 33. p. 641.

‡ Οἱ τὸ γενῶν ἀνδρωπῶν εἶναι, ἢ θεῶν. Hom. 19. sect. 19. p. 746.

*Supreme*

*Supreme God*, the father of all. This was urged against the trinitarians who made a *second God* of Christ; and it is urged by Peter against Simon, saying, "He ought to be rejected, who even listens to any thing against the monarchy of God\*."

Cotelerius says, that there are interpolations of Arians in this work. But if there be any such, they have escaped my notice. There is, however, a pretty evident interpolation of some trinitarian in it, viz. in the doxology. "Thine is the eternal praise, and glory [to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit] for ever, Amen †." That the words inclosed in brackets are an interpolation, is evident, not only from their holding a language entirely different from that of the whole work, but from the awkwardness and incoherence with which they are introduced, after a pronoun in the singular number. viz. *thine*. The interpolater would have

\* Αξιός ἐν τῆς ἀποβολῆς πάσι καὶ τῆς τε θεῆ μοναρχίας αὐτομονῶν καὶ ἀμῆσαι τι τοῦτον θελήσας: Hom. 3. sect. 9. p. 636.

† Σὺ γὰρ ἐστὶν δόξα αἰωνίος, ὕμνος [πατρί, καὶ υἱῷ, καὶ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι] ἐν τῆς συμπάσης αἰωνας: ἀμην. Hom. 3. sect. 72. p. 650.



concealed his design better, if he had written *together with the Son and Spirit*. It will be seen in its proper place, that this form of doxology, in which glory is given to the Holy Spirit, was complained of as an innovation in the time of Basil, and that it was altogether unknown before the council of Nice.

The philosophical opinions that appear to have been held by the author of the Clementines and Recognitions are absurd enough, but they were those of the age in which they were written, and, therefore, require no particular apology. He considered God as being in the form of man \*. But this is an opinion that is generally ascribed to the Jews, as we may see in the works of Agobard † ‡. It is also well

\* Και ο Σιμων εφη. ηδελον ειδεναι Περσε ει αληθως πιστευεις οτι η ανθρωπινη μορφη προς τον εκεινη μορφη διατελυται. και ο Περσος αληθως, ο Σιμων, εως εχειν πεπληροφημαι Hom. 16. sect. 19. p. 728.

† Deum esse corporeum, audire, & videre corpus hominis ad imaginem Dei factum. Synopsis.

‡ Dicunt denique Deum suum esse corporeum, & corporeis liniamentis per membra distinctum, & alia quidem parte illum audire ut nos, alia videre, alia vero loqui, vel aliud quid agere; ac per hoc humanum corpus ad imaginem

known to have been the opinion of Melito, the christian bishop of Sardis, and from him Tertullian is thought to have derived the same notion. Indeed, this *Anthropomorphitism*, Beaufobre shews to have been common in the christian church \*. The thing that is most objectionable in the conduct of this work is, that the writer thought *artifice* might be safely employed to promote a good cause, and he exemplifies this principle in a curious manner. But this dangerous maxim was generally admitted by the philosophers of that age. All the use that I would now make of this work is to exhibit the principles of the oriental philosophy, as held by one who did not profess christianity, that they may be compared with those of the christian Gnostics, which I shall now proceed to explain.

ginem Dei factum, excepto quod ille digitos manuum habeat inflexibiles ac rigentes, utpote qui nihil manibus operetur. Sedere autem more terreni allicujus regis in folio, quod a quatuor circumferatur bestiis, & magno quamvis palatio contineri. *De Judaicis Superstitionibus*, p. 75.

\* Histoire de Manichisme, vol. I. p. 501.

No inconsiderable argument for the antiquity of the Clementines may be drawn from the writer of them supposing that Christ preached only one year, which I have shewn to have been the opinion of the ancients in general, and which, from the circumstances of the gospel history, must be the truth; as I think I have proved in the Dissertations prefixed to my *Harmony of the Gospels*, and in my *Letters to the bishop of Waterford*. “If Christ,” says Peter, in his disputation with Simon, “appeared  
“and conversed only in vision, why did  
“he, as a teacher, converse a whole year  
“with his disciples, who were awake \*?”

\* Εἰ τις δὲ δι' ὄψιασιον πρὸς διδασκαλίαν σοφισθησὶν δύναται· καὶ εἰ μὲν ἔρεις δύνατον ἐστίν· διὰ τί ὅλῳ ἐνιαυτῷ ἐξηγητοῦσθαι παραμένειν ὠμώθησεν ὁ διδασκάλῳ· Hom. 17. sect. 19: p. 736.

## C H A P. III.

*Of the Principles of the Christian Gnostics.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the extreme repugnance between the principles of the oriental philosophy, and those of christianity, many persons who were addicted to that philosophy, were likewise so much impressed with the evidence of the divine mission of Christ, that they could not refuse to believe it; and yet, being strongly attached to their former principles, they endeavoured to retain both. Nor can it be doubted but that they were very sincere in their profession. Indeed, in that age there was no external temptation for any man to become a christian. Simon Magus was tempted with the sight of the miracles which Peter wrought, and especially his power of communicating the Holy Spirit; but it would soon be evident, that this was a gift that could not be exercised at pleasure, and therefore could not answer the purpose of any pretended converts; and wealth and

I power

power were not then on the side of christianity.

Besides, we are not to suppose that every person who professed christianity, embraced it in all its purity, or immediately resigned himself to the full and proper influence of it; and least of all are we to suppose that every person who believed it to be true, was resolved to expose himself to all hazards in adhering to it. Many persons who had been addicted to philosophy (in every system of which the doctrines concerning God, and his intercourse with the world, were primary articles) would consider christianity as a new and improved species of philosophy, and (as they had been used to do with respect to other systems) they would adopt, or reject, what they thought proper of it, and in doing this would naturally retain what was most consonant to the principles to which they had been long attached. Greater numbers still would content themselves with ranking themselves with christians while they were unmolested, but would abandon christianity in time of persecution, not thinking it necessary to maintain any  
truth

truth at the hazard of life, liberty, or property.

Christianity would, of course, find persons in every possible disposition and state of mind, and would therefore be received with every possible variety of effect; and in all cases *time* would be requisite to the full understanding both of its principles, and its requirements, and to separate the proper professors from the improper and unworthy. Of this we may be satisfied by reading the apostolical epistles, where we find accounts of persons who classed themselves with christians, and yet both disbelieved some of its most fundamental doctrines, and likewise allowed themselves in practices which it strictly prohibited. This continued a long time after the age of the apostles, as ecclesiastical history testifies.

With respect to opinions held by any persons who called themselves christians, and which were foreign to the genuine principles of christianity, it is evident to any person who attentively peruses the apostolical epistles, that they are all reducible to one class. The writers sometimes speak  
of,

of, or allude to, one of their errors or practices, and sometimes to another of them; but we no where find that they were of two or more classes. And we if collect all that the apostles have occasionally dropped concerning *heresy*, we shall find that all the articles of it make no more than *one system*; and that this was, in all its features, the very same thing with that which, in the age after the apostles, was universally called *Gnosticism*; the leading principles of it being those which have been represented as belonging to the oriental philosophy, and to have been ascribed to Simon Magus in the *Clementines*, viz. that matter is the source of all evil, and therefore, that the commerce of the sexes is not to be encouraged, and the resurrection no desirable thing.

History, however, shows that there were two distinct kinds of the Gnostics, who equally held the general principles above-mentioned; and these were the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*. It is to the former only that the apostle Paul ever alludes; and accordingly we find, by the unanimous testimony of all ecclesiastical history, the Jewish  
Gnostics

Gnostics (at the head of whom Cerinthus is placed) appear before any of the others. That this man himself was so early as Epiphanius represents him, viz. as opposing Peter\*. may not perhaps be depended upon; but the tradition of John meeting with him at Ephesus† is not improbable, especially as his sect is spoken of as being most prevalent in Asia Minor‡. The Nicolaitans, concerning whom we are much in the dark, we may be almost certain were Gnostics, from what is mentioned of them in the book of Revelation, and from other Gnostics being said to be derived from them ||.

These authorities are much strengthened by an attention to the actual state of things

\* Hær. 28. vol. 1. p. 111.

† Euseb. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 28. p. 123. and lib. 4. cap. 14. p. 161.

‡ Εν ταύτῃ γὰρ τῇ παλίδι, φημι δι' Ἀσια, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ Γαλατία, πάντι μάλιστα τὸ τέλος διδασκαλιῶν. Epiphanius Hær. 28. vol. 1. p. 114.

|| Καὶ ἐκείθεν ἀρχοῦσι αἱ τῆς ψευδοῦς γνώσεως αἰρέσεις, τῶν ποσῶν ἐπιφανεσθαι φημι δι' Ἰωάννου, &c. Ibid. Hist. 25. vol. 1. p. 77.

among



among christians in the age of the apostles. For we there find no certain trace of that doctrine which most of all distinguished the Gnostics in the following age, viz. that the supreme God, the Father of Jesus Christ, was not the being who made the world, or gave the law to the Jews. The Gnostic teachers who opposed the apostles were Jews, who together with a most rigid adherence to the law (and consequently firmly believing it was the true God who made the world, who gave the law by Moses, and lastly spake to men by Jesus Christ) held every other principle that is ascribed to the Gnostics, as will be clearly seen when I come to the detail of them. They were therefore, in all respects, the same that the Cerinthians are described to have been. From the mean opinion which they entertained of *matter*, and their contempt of the *body*, they would not allow that the man Jesus was the Christ; but they either supposed that he was man only in appearance, having nothing more than the semblance of a body, so as to deceive  
those

those who conversed with him; or if he had a real body, it was some celestial intelligence, some principal emanation from the supreme being, that was properly *the Christ*. This Christ they said entered into him at his baptism, and quitted him at his death.

That the authors of heresy in the time of the apostles were chiefly Jews, is evident from a variety of circumstances, and may be inferred particularly from Tit. i. 9. &c.  *Holding fast the faithful word, as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth.* The persons who opposed Paul at Corinth were also evidently Jews, and so was Alexander at Ephesus.

My object, as I have observed already, does not require that I should enter very minutely into the history of the Gnostics, I shall therefore only give an outline of their system; but this will contain a view of all their distinguishing tenets, shewing the dependence they had on each other, and especially their influence with respect to christianity, as it was held by those who were not Gnostics, and as it continues to be held by many to this day. To each article, I shall likewise subjoin a view of each tenet as it may be inferred from the New Testament, that no doubt may be entertained of these being the very heretics alluded to there, and of course of their being the *only heretics* in that age; which is an article of great importance in my general argument.

It seems probable, that Gnosticism was in a great measure repressed by the writings of the apostles, as we do not find that the Gnostics made any great figure from that time till the reign of Adrian, when several distinguished teachers of that doctrine made their

their appearance; as Cerdon, who is said by Eusebius, to have been of the school of Simon\*, and to have appeared in the time of Hyginus, the seventh bishop of Rome from the time of the apostles, Marcion of Pontus, who succeeded him, and who was living in the time of Justin Martyr†; but especially Basilides of Alexandria, and Valentinus, the most celebrated of them all, and whose followers were the most numerous in the time of Tertullian‡, and continued to be so till the time of Manes, who was after the council of Nice. From

\* Κερδων τις απο των περι τον Σιμωνα τας αφορμας λαβων, και επιδημησας εν τη Ρωμη επι Υγινης ενανον κληρον της επισκοπικης διαδοχης απο των Αποστολων εχουσις, εδιδαξε τον υπο τε νομω κ' προφητων μεμερυγμενον Θεον, μη ειναι Πατερα τω Κυρω ημων Ιησω χριστω. τον μεν γαρ γνωριζεσθαι τον δε αγνωστον ειναι. κ' τον μεν δικαιον τον δε αγαθον υπαρχων. διαδεξαμενος δε αυτον Μαρκιων ο Πουλικος, ηξησε το διδασκαλειον, απηρυθρασμενος βλασφημων. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 11. p. 155.

† Μαρκιωνα δε τινα, Πουλικον, ος κ' νυν εστι διδασκων τωσ πειθομενωσ, αλλον τινα νομιζειν μειζονα τω δημιουργω Θεω. Οσ καλα παν γειθ ανθρωπων, δια τωσ των δαμμωνωσ συλλογηωσ, πολλωσ πεποτιστωσ βλασφημιασ λεγειν. Apol. 1. p. 43.

‡ Valentiniani frequentissimum plane collegium inter hæreticos. Adv. Valentinianos, sect. 1. p. 250.

that time his system, called the *Manichean*, was the most predominant.

It should seem, however, that the preceding Gnostic systems had been in some measure repressed before the council of Nice, but that they revived about the same time that Manes appeared. For Theodoret speaks of the heresies of Marcion, Valentinus, Manes, and other docetæ, as being *revived* in his time\*. Theodoret speaks of about a thousand Marcionites in his diocese, and the great number of books that were published against them in the second century, shews, as Dr. Lardner observes, the prevalence of his doctrine †.

Gnosticism prevailed most in the East; for the principles of it were more agreeable to those of the oriental philosophy, which was, in several respects, different from that of Plato, which prevailed more in the West; though Egypt, where Pla-

† Οι γαρ την Μαρμιωνος, κ' βαλεντινου, κ' Μανητος, κ' των αλλων Δοκίλων αιρεσιν επι τα παρούσης ανακειμενοι, δυσχεραίνουτες οι την αιρεσιν αυτων αήλικους στήλινομεν. Ep. 82. Opera, vol. 3. p.955.

† History of Heretics, vol. 1. p. 210.

tonism prevailed as much as in any place whatever, was likewise distinguished by giving rise to some very eminent Gnostics. Rome, it is observed, was more free from Gnosticism than most other places. It is said, however, by Epiphanius, to have been introduced there in the time of Anicetus\*.

The principles of this system, whatever we may think of it at present, must have been exceedingly captivating at the time of their publication, as many excellent men were much taken with them. This was the case with Epiphanius †. with the father of Gregory Nazianzen ‡, and the famous Austin who is well known to have been a Manichean. I shall now proceed to mark the distinguishing features of the Gnostics; and this is so uniformly done by all the writers who mention them, that there is no danger of mistaking them for those of any other sect whatever.

‡ Εν χρόνις Ανικητις η προδεδηλωμενη Μαρκελλινα εν Ρωμη γεγομενη, την λυμην της Καρποκρα διδασκαλιας εξεμεσασα πολλης των εκεισε λυμνησμενη ηφρανισε κ) ειδεν γεγονεν η αρχη γνωστικων των καλημενων.  
Hær. 27. vol. 1. p. 107.

† Hær. 26. vol. 1. p. 99. ‡ Or. 19. Opera, p. 297.

## SECTION I.

*Of the Pride of the Gnostics.*

AS the Gnostics were generally persons of education, and addicted to the study of philosophy, the most conspicuous feature in their general character, was their *pride*, their contempt of the vulgar, and of their opinions, boasting of their own knowledge, and being proud of their superiority to others. They represented their institution as more refined than that of other christians, and pretended to a degree of *perfection* which other christians did not claim. This feature is equally marked by the christian Fathers, and the apostles; and it will be seen, in its proper place, that, in opposition to them, the unitarian christians were considered as *weak*, and *simple people*, in all respects the very reverse of the Gnostics.

Irenæus says, that the Gnostics pretended to perfection, and called themselves spiritual;

ritual \* ; and he says, that they called the orthodox ψυχικοί, *carnal* †. Clemens Alexandrinus also speaks of the Gnostics “ as pretending to perfection, boasting “ of more knowledge than the apostles ; “ whereas Paul himself says, that he had “ not yet attained, nor was already per- “ fect †.” But I have no occasion to quote many authorities for ‘a circumstance which marks the Gnostics wherever they appear ; and it is equally evident, that there were teachers of christianity pretending to the same superiority of knowledge and perfection in the time of the apostles.

The first certain evidence of the existence of the Gnostic doctrine in the christian

\* Plurimi autem & contemptores facti, quasi jam perfecti, sine reverentia, & in contemptu viventes, semet ipsos spirituales vocant, & se nosse jam dicunt eum qui sit intra pleroma ipsorum refrigerii locum. Lib. 3. cap. 15. p. 237.

† Δια τούτο εν ημας ψυχικως ονομαζεσθαι. Lib. 1. chap. 1. p. 32.

‡ Εμοι δε η θαναταζειν επεισιν. οπως σφας τελειωσ τινες ποτρωσι καλον η γνωτικως υπερ τον Αποστολον φρονεσιν, φυσικωμενοι τε η φρατ- τημενοι . αυτη ομολογησινος τε Πλουτου περι εαυτου, εν ον ηδη ελαβω, η ηδη τελειωμαι. Pæd. lib. 1. cap. 6. p. 107.



church is at the time of Paul's writing his first epistle to the Corinthians, which was probably in the year 56; and the false teachers of that place are distinctly marked by the apostles for their *pride*, conceit, and high pretensions to wisdom. In opposition to their pretended deep knowledge, the apostle says, 1 Cor. i. 18. *The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them that perish, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.* iii. 18. *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.* He seems to allude to their pretended spirituality and refinement, when he says, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as to babes in Christ.* He likewise speaks ironically of their pretensions to *wisdom*, 1 Cor. iv. 10. *We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ,* and x. 15. *I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say.* That they were Gnostics who corrupted the gospel at Corinth, is evident from the 15th chapter of this epistle, where it appears, that they explained away the doctrine of the resurrection.

These

These teachers are distinguished by the same features at Ephesus not long after this, as we find, 1 Tim. vi. 3. *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, &c.* In the epistle to the Colossians, chap. ii. 18. the apostle cautions the christians against those who intruded into things which they had not seen, being vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, which could be no other than the same description of men. It is also probable that they were the same persons that the apostle James alluded to, chap. iii. 13. *Who is a wise man, and indued with knowledge among you; Let him shew, out of a good conversation, his works with meekness of wisdom.* Let us now see what kind of knowledge these Gnostics had to be so proud of.

## S E C T I O N II.

*Tenets of the Gnostics.--Of the Origin of Evil,  
and the Doctrine of Æons.*

**A**LL the Gnostics were persuaded, that *evil* had some other cause than the supreme being, but, perhaps, none of them before Manes held that it arose from a principle absolutely independent of him. Bardesanes maintained that evil was not made by God\*. Marcion, Cerdon, and Manes, all held that the devil and demons were unbegotten †. Valentinus held that matter was self-existent, and the cause of evil ‡.

But the great boast of the Gnostics was their profound and intricate doctrine con-

\* *Ἄλλοι πνεύματα το λέγειν ἡμᾶς το κακὸν ὑπο τε θεῶ γεγενηθῆαι. Ο θεος γὰρ κακῶν ἀναίτιος.* Origen *Contra Marcionitas*, p. 70, 71.

† *Τὸν δὲ διαβόλον καὶ τοὺς ὑπ' ἐμῶν τελείας δαίμονας, κατὰ τῆς Μαρμαριανῶς, καὶ Κερδωνῶς, καὶ τῆς Μασωνίως μύθου, ἐκ ἀγεννητῶς εἶναι φάμεν.* Theodoret *Hær. Fab. lib. 5. cap. 8. vol. 4. p. 268.*

‡ *Διόπερ εδοξεν μοι, συνυπαρχειν τε αἰῶνι, ὡ τινοςμα ἡσῆ: ἐξ ἧς τα οὐκ ἀδημιουργησε, τέχνη σοφῆ διακρίνας, καὶ διακοσμησας καθεως, ἐξ ἧς καὶ τα κακα εἶναι δοκεῖ.* Origen *Contra Marcionitas*, p. 88.

cerning

cerning the derivation of various intelligences from the supreme mind, which they thought to be done by *emanation* or *efflux*. And as these were equally capable of producing other intelligences in the same manner, and some of them were male and others female, there was room for endless combinations of them; so that the genealogy of these intelligences, or *aons*, as they were called, must have been a very intricate business.

Basilides held that the unbegotten produced *nous*, that *logos* was produced (or *prolated*) from *nous*, that *phronesis* [that is, *thought*] came from *logos*; from *phronesis* came *wisdom* and *power*, and from these angels and archangels, and that these made *the heavens* \*. Marcion was the first who said that there were three gods †; mean-

\* Εφησε γαρ τον αγεννητον νουν πρωτον γεννησαι, εκ δε τας νοος προβληθηναι τον λογον, φρονισιν δε απο τας λογος. απο δε της φρονισεως σοφισιν η δυναμιν, εκ δε τειων αγγελες η αρχαγγελος. τειεις δε δημιουργησαι τον θρανον. Theodoret. Har. Fab. lib. 1. lect. 4. vol. 4. p. 194.

† Πρωτος γαρ Μαρτιων ο αδελφωστος, ο πρωτος τρεις θεος εκπων. Cyrilli. Jer. Cat. 16. p. 226.

ing,

ing, perhaps, the three gods of Simon above-mentioned, viz. the supreme being, him that made the world, and him that gave the law. For I do not find that any of those who believed that there was another maker of the world besides the supreme being, thought that there was any other evil being, or *devil*, distinct from him; it being imagined that, upon either hypothesis, the origin of evil, which was the problem to be resolved by all these schemes, was sufficiently accounted for.

The Gnostics also held that these superior intelligences might occasionally come in the form of men, to instruct the world. Such they imagined Christ to have been. Simon Magus pretended to be one of these great powers; and, it is said, that Manes maintained that he was the *Paraclete* promised by Christ\*.

The most complicated system of æons is that of Valentinus, of which we have a particular account in Irenæus, from which

\* Ο δε δυσσεβης Μανης, εαυτον ειπαι τον υπο χριτου πεμφθεντα παρακλητον ειπειν ελογμησεν, Cyrilli. Jer. Cat. 16. p. 226.

his editor Grabe has drawn out a distinct table, which he has inserted in his edition of Irenæus.

As it is no where said that Valentinus, or Basilides, or, indeed, any of the earlier Gnostics whose names have come down to us, were the original inventors of the system of æons, it may be concluded to be a part of the ancient oriental philosophy, and therefore to have existed long before the age of the apostles. It may be presumed, at least, that, in some form or other, it was held by the Gnostics of their time, and that these were the *endless genealogies* of which Paul makes such frequent mention, as *idle* and *vain*; and, indeed, nothing could be more so than the doctrine of the intricate relations that these æons bore to each other. The genealogies of particular Jewish families could never have furnished any cause of dispute or inquiry to the Gentile christians at Ephesus, and other places, where we read of there being disturbances on account of these things. But the genealogies of the Gnostic æons made a considerable

siderable part of a general system of faith, very capable of deeply interesting those who gave much attention to them.

The passages in the New Testament, in which mention is made of these fabulous genealogies, are the following, 1 Tim. i. 3. *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith.* Ch. iv. 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in words of faith, and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained; but refuse profane and old wives fables.* Ch. vi. 20. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babbling, and oppositions of science falsely so called.* 2 Tim. ii. 15. *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth; but shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto*

*more ungodliness. And their word will eat as does a canker, of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.*

As the persons here described were most evidently Gnostics, it is almost impossible not to conclude that the *prophane and vain babblings*, synonymous no doubt to the *fables and endless genealogies*, were some part of the Gnostic system; and in this there is nothing to which they can be imagined to correspond beside that of the *æons*. It is, no doubt, the same thing to which the apostle alludes, 2 Tim. ii. 23. *But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strife.* Tit. iii. 9. *But avoid foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject.* The Gnostics, as will be shewn hereafter, were the only heretics of that age; and therefore the *genealogies* here mentioned must have been some part of their system.

It



It is probable, that the apostle Paul might allude to the great respect paid to these invisible *aons*, by what he says of the *worshipping of angels*, and *intruding into those things which a man has not seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind*, Col. ii. 18. as the last circumstance evidently marks the Gnostics. And as they pretended to great *spirituality* and dislike of the *flesh*, the apostle might intend a farther rebuke to them by insinuating that their minds were fleshly.

Lastly, it is possible that the apostle Peter might allude to these idle Gnostic fables, when he said, 2 Pet. i. 16. *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, &c.*

## SECTION

S E C T I O N III.

*The Doctrine of the Gnostics concerning the Soul.*

THERE was something peculiar in the doctrine of the Gnostics, with respect to the *soul*. As it was a fundamental principle with all the ancients, that there could be no proper *creation*, and consequently that souls, not being material, nor yet created out of nothing, were either parts detached from the soul of the universe, or emanations from the divine mind, this doctrine was held by the Gnostics. And as some men are vicious and others virtuous, it was supposed that their souls had two different origins, and were therefore good or bad *by nature*, the good having sprung from the divine mind, mediately, or immediately, and the bad having had some other origin, the same from which every thing *evil* was

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supposed

supposed to have sprung. They likewise held that the future fates of men depended upon their original nature. Saturninus, Theodoret says, held that “there were two kinds of souls, the one good, and the other bad; and that they had this difference from nature, and that as the evil dæmon assisted the bad, so the Saviour came to assist the good\*.” Origen says, that the disciples of Basilides and Valentinus, held that “there is a kind of souls that are always saved, and never perish, and others that always perish, and are never saved †.” He also says that “Marcion introduced different kinds

\* *Δύο των ανθρωπων είναι λεγει διαφορας, η τις μεν είναι αγαθας, τις δε πονηρας, η ταυτην εν φυσηι την διαφοραν ειληφεναι. των δε πονηρων δαιμονων τοις πονηροις συμπραττεσιν. ηλθε, φησιν, ο σωτηρ επαμυναι τοις αγαθοις.* Hæc. Fab. lib. 1. cap. 3. vol. 4. p. 194.

† Nescio quomodo qui de schola Valentina et Basilidis veniunt, hæc ita a Paulo dicta non audientes, putent esse naturam animarum quæ semper salva fit, et nunquam pereat, et aliam quæ semper pereat et nunquam salvetur. In Rom. Opera, vol. 2. p. 596.

“ of souls\*.” This doctrine of the original difference of souls, is likewise well known to have been part of the Manichean system; and therefore a considerable topic of argument with Austin, and others who wrote against the Manicheans, is to prove that men are not wicked by *nature*, but from the abuse of *free will*. On this subject Austin, who wrote against the Manicheans in the early part of his life, advanced many excellent things in favour of free will, and the natural power of man to do good and evil, which he contradicted when he afterwards wrote against the Pelagians. We find this doctrine of fate ascribed to Simon in the *Recognitions* †.

As the Gnostics were always ready to alledge the scriptures in support of their doctrines, they pretended to have an authority in them even for this part of their system; for Cyril of Jerusalem says, that

\* Marcion tamen, et omnes qui diversis figmentis varias introducunt animarum naturas. Ibid. p. 479.

† Et Simon nescio inquit si vel hoc ipsa sciam. Unusquisque enim sicut ei fato decernitur vel sapit aliquid, vel intelligit, vel patitur. Lib. 3: cap. 22. p. 523.

“ some inferred from 1 John iii. 10. *By this we know the children of God, and the children of the Devil*, that some men were to be saved, and others to be damned by nature. But this holy sonship,” he says, “ we arrive at, not from necessity, but choice. Neither,” adds he, “ was Judas the traitor the son of the devil, or destruction, by nature\*.”

As these Gnostics held that the souls of all good men were derived from the divine mind, they could have no difficulty in admitting that Christ, whom they supposed to be one of the greater æons, was of the same substance with the Father. Accordingly, Beaufobre observes, that, on this principle, they escaped all censure at the council of Nice. They even used the famous term (ὁμοουσιος) *consubstantial*, with respect to the human soul; in opposition to which principle Theodoret says, “ The

\* Οὐ γὰρ ἀνεξήμεδα τῶν κακῶς εἰσλαμβανόντων τὸ εἰρημένον ἐκεῖνο : τὸ ἐκ τῆς γινωσκόμεν τὰ τέκνα τῆ δὲβ. καὶ τὰ τέκνα τῆς διαβόλης, ὡς ὄντων φύσει τινῶν, σώζομένων ἢ ἀπολλυμένων ἐν ἀνθρώποις. εἶε γὰρ ἐπιταγῆς, ἀλλ' ἐκ προαιρέσεως εἰς τὴν τοιαύτην ἀγίαν υἱοθεσίαν ἐρχόμεδα. εἶε ἐκ φύσεως ὁ προδότης Ἰούδας υἱὸς τῆς διαβόλης ἢ ἀπωλείας. Cat. 7. p. 108.

“ soul

“ soul is not consubstantial with God, as  
 “ the wicked Manicheans hold, but was  
 “ created out of nothing\*.”

This doctrine concerning the soul seems to have been peculiar to the Gentile Gnostics. The Jewish Gnostics do not appear ever to have departed from their proper principles, so far as to suppose that any souls had a proper divine origin; but either thought that they were created out of nothing, or, if they were so far philosophers as to deny this, they would probably say, with some others, that they were only *the breath of God*, and not any proper part of his substance. Accordingly, we do not find any allusion to this doctrine, of *two kinds of souls* in the apostolical writings.

\* Ου γὰρ κατὰ τὸν διδασκῆν Μαρκίωνος λόγον ὁμοῦσιος ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ πεποιγηκόσῳ θεῷ, ἀλλ’ ἐκ μη οὐτιῶν ἐκτίθη. Hær. Fab. lib. 5. cap. 5. Opera, vol. 4. p. 264.

## SECTION IV.

*The Doctrine of the Gnostics concerning the Maker of the World, and the Author of the Jewish Dispensation.*

**A**NOTHER article which was probably peculiar to the Gentile Gnostics, and which makes the greatest figure in their history, is, that the supreme being, the Father of Jesus Christ, was not the maker of the world, or the author of the Jewish dispensation; for that these were derived from some inferior and malevolent being. This was the distinguishing tenet of all the celebrated Gnostics who arose about the time of Adrian; and as they derived their principles not from Platonism, but from the oriental philosophy, Clemens Alexandrinus, speaking of them in general, says, “ The heresies, which are according to a  
“ barbarous philosophy, though they teach  
“ one God, and sing hymns to Christ, do  
“ it in pretence only, and not in truth;  
“ for they have invented another God, and  
“ shew

“ shew another Christ, than him who is  
 “ announced by the prophets\*.” Again,  
 he says, “ Some pretend that the Lord,”  
 meaning the God of the Old Testament,  
 “ could not be a good being, on account  
 “ of the rod, the threatening, and the  
 “ fear,” meaning his justice and severity†.  
 And Tertullian says, they deny that God,  
 meaning the supreme being, is to be feared ‡.

According to the Gnostics, the god of  
 the Jews was so far from being a good  
 being, or in any respect subservient to the  
 designs of the supreme being, that he was  
 at open variance with him; so that the true

\* Διοπερ, αι καλα την βαρβαρον φιλοσοφιαν αιρεσεις, και θεον λεγουσιν  
 ενα, και χριστον υμνωσι, καλα περιληψιν λεγουσιν, η προς αληθειαν.  
 αλλον τε γαρ θεον παρευρισκωσι, κ' τον χριστον ηχ ως αι προφητεια  
 παραδιδουσιν ενδεχομαι. Strom. lib. 6. p. 675.

Porphyrus in his life of Plotinus, speaking of the chris-  
 tians, and the heretics, says, that the latter were of old  
 philosophy. Γεγονασι δε κατ' αυλον των χριστιανων παλαιοι μεν κ' η  
 αλλοι αιρετικοι δε εκ της παλαιας φιλοσοφιας αντημενοι.

† ΕΝΤΑΥΘΑ επιφυσουαι τινες, εκ αγαθων ειναι φημενοι τον Κυριον  
 δια την ραβδον, κ' την απειλην, κ' τον φοβον. Ped. lib. i. cap. 8,  
 p. 113.

‡ Négant deum timendum. De Præscrip. sect. 43. p.  
 218.



God was obliged to take measures in order to counteract his designs. Saturninus says that “ the father of Christ, willing to destroy the god of the other angels, and of the Jews, sent Christ into the world, for the salvation of those who were to believe on him\*.” Basilides said that “ the God of the Jews, willing to reduce all nations to his power, and opposing other principalities, the Supreme Being seeing this, sent his first-born *nous*, whom he called Christ, to save those who believed on him †.” Valentinus said that “ the true God was not known till our Saviour announced him ‡ ;” and Eusebius informs us, that Cerdon, of the school of Simon, coming to Rome in the time of Hyginus, the

\* Τοῦ πάτερ α φησι τὴ χριστὴ, κἀλατῆσαι βεβλομενον μὲτα τῶν ἄλλων ἀγγελῶν καὶ τοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων θεοῦ, ἀποσείλαι τὸν χριστὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἐπὶ σωτηρία τῶν εἰς αὐτὸν πειθευόντων ἀνθρώπων. Theodoret. Hæc. Fab. lib. 1. cap. 3. vol. 4. p. 194.

† Βουλκιδεὶ δὲ τὴν τοῖς οἰκείοις ἀπαύτῃ ὑπόλαξαι τὰ ἔθνη, τῆς ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἀντιπραξασθαι, τὸν δὲ ἀγεννητὸν ταύτῃ θεωμενον τὸν πρῶτολογον αὐτὸν νῦν ἀποσείλαι, ὃν καὶ χριστὸν προσηγορεῖται, ὡς σωσάμενος τῆς πειθεύσαι προαιρημένους. Ibid. lib. 1. cap. 4. vol. 4. p. 195.

‡ Ἀγνωσθῆναι τοῖς πᾶσι πρὶν τῆς τῆς χριστὸς παρουσίας. Irenæus, lib. 1. cap. 16. p. 85.

“ seventh bishop from the time of the  
 “ apostles, taught that the God who was  
 “ preached in the law and the prophets  
 “ was not the father of our Lord Jesus  
 “ Christ; for that the one was *known*, the  
 “ other *unknown*; the one was *just*, the  
 “ other *good*. He was succeeded by Mar-  
 “ cion of Pontus, who increased the school,  
 “ blaspheming without blushing \*. Of  
 Marcion, Justin Martyr says, that “ he was  
 “ living in his time, teaching his followers  
 “ that there is a god greater than he that  
 “ made the world, who is every where, by  
 “ the instigation of the daemon, teaching  
 “ many blasphemies †.” It was on ac-

\* Κερδων δε τις απο των περι τον Σιμωνα τας αφορμας λαβων, κ' επιδημησας εν τη Ρωμη επι Γγινω εναιλον κληρον της επισκοπικης διαδοχης απο των Αποστολων εχοντος. εδιδαξε τον υπο τρι νομω κ' προφητων κεκαρυγμενον θεον, μη εινα Πατερα τρι Κυρια ημων Ιησω χριστω, τον μεν γαρ γνωριζεσθαι· τονδε αγνωσεν εινα. κ' τον μεν δικαιον· τον δε αγαθον υπαρχειν. διαδεξαμενος δε αυτου Μαρκιον ο Πουλικος, ηυξησε το διδασκαλειον, απηρυθριασμενος βλασφημων. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 11. p. 155.

† Μαρκιονα δε τινα Πουλικον, ος κ' νυν ει επι διδασκων τρις πειθομενος, αλλον τινα νομιζειν μειζονα τρι δημιουργω θεω· ος καλα πασι γενος ανθρωπων, δια της των δαιμονων συλληψεως. πολλας πεπαιηκε βλασφημιας λεγειν. Apol. I. p. 43.

count of the Gnostics reviling the maker of the world, whom the other christians justly considered as the true God, that they are so generally charged with *blasphemy*; so that in those early ages, a *heretic*, a *blasphemer*, and a *Gnostic*, were synonymous terms.

Contradictory as these principles manifestly are to those of the scriptures, the Gnostics were not sensible of it, and even did not scruple to argue from them. Marcion argued **from** its being said, that “ *no man knows the Father but the Son*, that “ *Christ preached a God who had not been known either to the Jews by revelation, or to the Gentiles by nature* \*.” He also alledged in support of his doctrine concerning the author of the Jewish dispensation, Paul’s saying, Gal. iii. *Christ bath*

\* Sed, nemo fit qui fit pater, nisi filius; et qui scit filius, nisi pater, et cuicumque filius revelaverit. Atque ita Christus ignotum Deum prædicavit. Hinc enim et alii hæretici fulciuntur, opposcentes creatorem omnibus notum; et Israeli, secundum familiaritatem; et nationibus, secundam naturam. Tertullian adv. Marcionitas, lib. 4. sect. 25. p. 441.

*redeemed*

*redeemed us from the curse of the law* \*. According to Austin, the Manicheans said, that “ the Old and New Testament con-  
 “ tradicted each other, by the former as-  
 “ cribing the creation to God the Father,  
 “ and the latter to Christ †.”

To these arguments the catholic christians found no difficulty in making very satisfactory replies, especially from our Saviour’s acknowledging the God of the Jews to be his Father, as in John viii. 54. *Jesus answered, if I honour myself, my honour is nothing. It is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God.*

Even the Platonic philosophers were much offended at this part of the Gnostic

\* *Christus nos redemit de maledicto legis.* Subrepat in hoc loco Marcion de potestate creatoris, quem sanguinarium, crudelium infamat, et vindicem, asserens nos redemptos esse per Christum, qui alterius boni dei filius sit. Jerom. In Gal. cap. 2. vol. 6. p. 134.

† Hoc capitulum legis adversum esse evangelio stultissimi Manichæi arbitrantur; dicentes in Genesi scriptum esse, quod Deus per seipsum fecerit cælum et terram, in evangelio autem scriptum esse per dominum nostrum Jesum Christum fabricatum esse mundum; ubi dictum est, et mundus per ipsum factus est. Contra Adimantum, vol. 6. p. 174.

system, because, in order to prove that the world was not made by the supreme and essentially good being, they represented it as abounding with all evil. and took pleasure in vilifying it. Plotinus wrote a tract against the Gnostics, in which he speaks of the world as exhibiting marks of goodness. He says, "it is not to be admitted that " this world is a bad one, because there " are many disagreeable things in it\*." Though, according to the principles of Platonism, the world was made of matter, and men and animals were not made by the Supreme Being himself, they were, however, made by his direction, and with a great mixture of good in them; whereas the Gnostics held, that the world was not only made of bad and intractable materials, but also by a being of a bad disposition. The Gnostics, whom the apostle Paul had to do with, did not hold this principle with respect to the maker of the world. They were Jews, who believed as other Jews did

\* Ου δε το κακως γεγονεναι του δε τον κοσμον δδισιν, τω πολλω  
 μητι εν αυτω δυσχερη. En. 2, lib. 9. cap. 4. p. 202;

in this respect, and they held the law of Moses in the greatest possible veneration.

It appears to me, that the Gnostics had advanced so many specious arguments to prove that the Supreme Being himself was not the immediate maker of the world, and the author of the Jewish dispensation, that the orthodox christians were staggered by them, and so far conceded to their adversaries, as to allow that the being who made the world, and who appeared to the patriarchs and the prophets, was not the Supreme God himself. On this account they might be the more readily induced to adopt the principles of the Platonists, and of Philo, who said that the world was made, and that the law was given, by the *divine logos* personified. This being the *Son of God*, they said he must be the same with *Christ*. In fact, the orthodox used many of the same arguments with the Gnostics, to prove that the supreme being was not the person who spake to the patriarchs.

In some part of Justin's dialogue with Trypho, one might imagine that Justin had been a Gnostic, and Trypho an unitarian christian.

christian. Trypho says, "Prove to me first that there is another god besides the maker of all things\*." Justin answered, "I will endeavour to shew you, from the scriptures, that there is another God and Lord, and one who is so called, besides the maker of all things †." This is precisely what a Gnostic would have said. But he proceeds to speak of this *second god* as the messenger of the true God, which the Gnostics would not have done. "He is also," says he, "called an angel, on account of his informing men of what he that made all things, above whom there is no God, wills that he should inform them."

\* Αποκρινεν εν μοι πρῶτον πως εχεις αποδειξει οτι κ' ἄλλο θεος πᾶρα τον ποιητην των ολων, Dial. p. 238.

† Α λεγω πειρασσαι υμας πεισαι, νοηταιας τας γραφας, οτι εστι κ' λεγειται θεος κ' Κυριος εἰς υπερ τον ποιητην των ολων. ος κ' αγγελος καλειται, δια το αγγελειν τοις ανθρωποις οσαπερ βουλειται αυτοις αγγελειται ο των ολων ποιητης, υπερ εν ἄλλο θεος εκ εστι. Ibid. p. 249.

## SECTION

S E C T I O N V.

*The Doctrine of the Gnostics concerning the Person of Christ.*

THE principles of the Gnostics which I have occasion to consider most particularly, are those which relate to *the person of Christ*. Their aversion to every thing that bore the name, and had the properties of *matter*, was such, that they could not think well of any thing that was material. Accordingly, besides supposing that the being who was properly entitled to the appellation of *the Christ*, or the messenger of God to man, was a superangelic spirit, who had pre-existed, and was sent to make his appearance among men, all of them would not admit that what he did assume, as necessary to his manifestation, was a *proper human body*, consisting of real flesh and blood, but something that had only the external appearance of one, and that it was incapable



able of passion, and of the sufferings and pain of a real human body. This was so much a general opinion among them, that it is commonly ascribed to them all; so that Epiphanius says, “the Gnostics say that Jesus was not born of Mary, but only exhibited by her, and that he did not take flesh except in appearance\*.”

As it was an opinion of the Gnostics, that Christ had no proper human body, of course they could not believe that Mary had a proper *child birth*, for they said that, on inspection, she was found to be a virgin after the delivery, which Clemens Alexandrinus observes †. And as they supposed this phantom in the human form could not suffer, or die, Novatian says, that “both the

\* Μη ειναι δε αυλου απο Μαρίας γεγεννημενον, αλλα δια Μαρίας δεδειγμενον. Σαρκα δε αυλου μη ειληφεναι, αλλ' η μνον δοκουν ειναι. Hær. 26. p. 91.

† Αλλ' ως εοικεν τοις πολλοις, κ' μεχρι νυν δοκει η Μαριαμ λεχθα ειναι, δια την τε παιδις γενησιν, εκ εσα λεχω· κ' γαρ μελα το τεκειν αυλην κωιδεισαν, φασι τινες, παρθενον ευρεθησαι. Strom. 7. p. 756.

This notion was afterwards adopted by the catholics; but Clemens Alexandrinus evidently ascribes it to the Gnostics.

“ birth

“ birth and the death of Christ are confutations of them \*.”

The opinion, however, that the body of Jesus was only the semblance of a proper human body, was not universal among the Gnostics. For the Cerinthians and Carpocratians believed that Jesus was not only a man, born as other men are, but also the proper offspring of Joseph as well as of Mary, and that he continued to be nothing more than any other man till his baptism, when the Cerinthians said that a super-angelic spirit, which alone they called *the Christ*, came into him †.

I shall proceed to mention the opinions of other Gnostics concerning the body of Jesus, which, though various, agree in this, that Jesus was not the Christ, and shew an aversion to do so much honour to any thing that had proper *flesh and blood*. Barde-

\* Omnes enim istos et nativitas Domini et mors ipsa confutat. Cap. 10. p. 31.

† Ανωθεν δε εκ τῆς ανω θεῆς μελα το αδρυνηται Ιησυν τον εκ σπερματος Ιωσηφ κ' Μαρίας γεγενημενον καλεηθηδηναι τον χριστον εις αλων. Epiphanius, Hær. 28. vol. 1. p. 110.

Βαλονιαι μεν Ιησυν οντως ανθρωπον ειπαι, ως ειπον, χριστον δε εν αυτω γεγενησθαι τον εξ περιγερας καλαβεβηκοια. Hær. 3. vol. 1. p. 138.

fanies maintained that Christ had a celestial body\*. Cerdo also denied that Christ was born of Mary†. According to Tertullian, “ Marcion denied the birth of Christ, that he might deny his flesh ; Apelles his scholar allowed the flesh, but denied the nativity ; and Valentinus both admitted the flesh and nativity, but gave a different interpretation to them‡” By denying the birth of Christ, they meant that Jesus derived nothing from his mother, but that whatever his body consisted of, it was something that only passed through

\* Περὶ τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ ζήμιον. Ἐγὼ γινώσκωμαι οὐκ ἔραπον σῶμα ἐλάβει. Origen *Contra Marcionitas*, p. 105.

† Μὴ εἶναι δὲ τὸν χριστὸν γεγεννημένον ἐκ Μαρίας, μηδὲ ἐν σαρκὶ πεφθῆναι, ἀλλὰ δοκῆσαι οὐκ, καὶ δοκῆσαι πεφθῆναι, δοκῆσαι δὲ ταῦτα πεποιθῆναι, Epiphanius, *Hær.* 41. vol. I. p. 300.

\* Marcion, ut carnem Christi negaret, negavit etiam nativitatem ; aut ut nativitatem negaret, negavit et carnem. Scilicet ne invicem sibi testimonium redderent et responderent, nativitas et caro : quia nec nativitas sine carne, nec caro sine nativitate : quasi non eadem licentia hæretica et ipse potuisset, admissa carne nativitatem negare, ut Apelles discipulus, et postea defertor ipsius ; aut carnem et nativitatem confessus, aliter illas interpretari, ut condiscipulus et condefertor ejus Valentinus. *De Carne, Christi. sect. 1.* p. 307.

her,

her, as *water through a pipe*. Accordingly, Epiphanius says, "Valentinus held that "the body of Christ came from heaven, "and took nothing from the virgin Mary\*." It is remarkable, that this very opinion was afterwards adopted by Apollinaris, who likewise maintained, with the Arians, that Christ had no human soul.

Christ having no proper human body, could not have the proper functions of one; and accordingly, Valentinus said that "Christ ate and drank in a peculiar manner, not voiding excrements †." With respect to the super-angelic nature of Christ, Valentinus held that he was one of the *æons*; and according to his genealogies, both *Christ* and the *Holy Spirit*, were the offspring of *Monogenes*, which came from *Logos* and *Zoe*, as these were the off-

\* Φασί δε ανωθεν κατανηνοχεναι το σωμα, κ' ως δια σωληνος υδαρ, δια Μαρίας της παρθενος διεληλυθηναι · μηθεν δε απο της παρθενουσης μητρας ειληφεναι, αλλα ανωθεν το σωμα εχειν. HÆT. 31. vol. I. p. 171.

† Παντα, φησιν, υπομεινεις, εγκρατής ην. θεόητα Ιησούς ειργαζέτο. ποθην κ' επινεν ιδίως, εκ αποδοξας τα βρωμαία. Clemens Al. Strom. lib. 3. p. 451.

spring of *Nous* and *Veritas*, and these of *Bythus*, and *Sige*\*.

It may be proper to observe in this place, that those of the Gnostics who believed that Christ was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary, must have thought that, antecedent to his baptism, he had a human soul, as well as a human body. Their opinion, therefore, concerning him after his baptism, must have been similar to that of the orthodox christians, who believed the *logos of the Father* to be attached to the *the man* Jesus. On the other hand, those Gnostics who thought that Christ had no proper human body, but only the appearance of one, must have held that he had no intelligent principle within him besides the super-angelic spirit which they called *the Christ*. These, therefore, resembled the Arians. Indeed, they can hardly be said to have differed from them at all, except with respect to the body of Christ, and his having made the world.\*

It is probable that the Gnostics differed much among themselves with respect to

\* Irenæus, lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 7, &c.

their

their celestial genealogies, and these being altogether the work of *imagination*, there was room for endless systems on the subject. All that deserves our notice is, that according to them all, Christ was a pre-existent spirit, which had been of high rank before he came into the world.

It appears to me highly probable, that it was in opposition of this doctrine of *æons*, that John wrote the Introduction to his gospel, in which he explains the only proper sense in which the terms *logos*, *only begotten*, *life*, &c. of which the Gnostics made such mysteries, ought to be taken; asserting, more especially, that the *logos*, which is spoken of in the scriptures, and the only *logos* that he acknowledged, was *the power of God*, an attribute of the Father, and therefore not to be distinguished from God himself.

It is possible, however, that John had heard of the doctrine of Philo, who made a *second God* of the *logos*; and if that kind of personification had begun to spread among christians so early as the time of John, it

is not impossible but that he might, in his usual indirect manner, allude to it. In any view, the meaning of the apostle seems to be as follows, “in the beginning, or before all time, was the *logos*, and the *logos* was with, or rather belonged to God, as his proper attribute, and therefore, was no other than *God himself*. By this *logos*, or power of God, all things were made, and without it was not any thing made that was made;” agreeably to what the Psalmist says, *By the word (logos) of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them, by the breath of his mouth; God spake and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast*, and many other passages of the same import.

The last of the Gnostics, viz. the Manicheans, thought as others had done before them, that Christ had no real flesh, but only the appearance of it\*, but according to Theophylact, Manes thought he had a real body till his baptism, when he left

\* Τον χριστον εν σαρκι γεγεννηκει & βεβηλει, φαιλασμα αυτων λεγων ειναι. Socratis, Hist. lib. 1. cap. 22. p: 55.

it in the river Jordan, and took another, which had only the appearance of one\*.

Aburd as these notions of the Gnostics are, and dangerous as we shall find their consequences were, it must not be forgotten, that the object of them was to do honour to Christ, as the most illustrious messenger of God to man. For it was thought that he could not have had that perfection of character which was requisite for his high office, if his mind had been subject to the influence of common flesh and blood. Marcion said, that “ he could not have been pure, if he took human flesh †.”

We find that the Gnostics argued in defence of even this part of their system from the New Testament. For we learn from Origen, that some of the heretics endeavoured to prove, from Paul’s saying, *We are planted in the likeness of Christ’s death*, that he did not really die, but only had the ap-

\* Οι Μανιχαίοι λεγουν οτι το σωμα αυτε απεδελο εν τω Ιορδανη, και α φαντασταν δε αλλο σωμα εδειξεν. In Matt. cap. 4. vol. 1. p. 20.

† Παυλν Μαρτιων ορα τι φησιν . εκ ηδυνατο ο θεος σαρκα αναλαβων μιναι καθαρως. Chrysostr. In Eph. vi. 10. vol. 10. p. 1188.



pearance of death \* ; and the Marcionites said that, according to Paul, Christ was only “ *in fashion as a man, and not a man †.*”

No writer in the New Testament opposes this very principle of the Gnostics concerning the person of Christ, as well as their general doctrine that Jesus was not the Christ, more plainly, or more earnestly, than John ; and yet we find, that Valentinus interpreted the introduction to John’s gospel in his favour ‡, making αρχη to be a principle different from the Father, and the same with the *monogenes*, and the *logos* different from the αρχη §.

\* Sed hoc non intelligentes quidam hæreticorum, cōnati sunt ex hoc apostoli loco afferere quod Christus non vere mortuus sit, sed similitudinem mortis habuerit, et visus sit magis mori quam vere mortuus sit. Origen Ad. Rom. Opera. vol. 2. p. 542.

† *Ἰδὲ, φησι, καὶ σχηματι, καὶ ὡς ἀνθρωπος.* Chrysofom In Phil. 2. Opera, vol. 10. p. 1250.

‡ *Ἐὶ τε Ἰωάννην τὸν μαθητὴν τὴ κυρίῳ διδάσκοντι τὴν πρώτην Ὀυδοῦσα μνημονεύουσαι αἰτίας λέξεσι, λεγούσας εἰως. Ἰωάννης, ὁ μαθητὴς τῆ κυρίῳ, βεβηλομένῳ εἰπεῖν τὴν τῶν ὁλῶν γενεσίν, κατ’ ἣν τὰ πᾶσιλα προσέβαλεν ὁ πατήρ ἀρχὴν τινὰ προῖδέλαι τὸ πρῶτον γεννηθῆν ὑπο τῆ θεῶ, ὅν δὲ καὶ υἱὸν μονογενῆ καὶ θεόν, κεκλημένον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ πᾶσιλα ὁ πατήρ προσέβαλε σπερματικῶς, ὑπο δὲ τῆς φησι τὸν λόγον προσέβηθηδαι, &c.* Irenæus, lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 39.

§ *Ibid.* See also Epiphanius, Hæret. 31. vol. 1. p. 196.

That

That the gospels, however, and especially that of John, are unfavourable to this principle of the Gnostics, is very evident; and Chrysoſtom repreſents it as “ the  
 “ firſt and principal reaſon why Chriſt is  
 “ exhibited with all the weakneſſes and  
 “ infirmities of human nature, to prove that  
 “ he had real fleſh, and that he meant that  
 “ all perſons who then lived, and all who  
 “ ſhould come after him, ſhould believe  
 “ that he was no apparition, or mere viſible  
 “ appearance, but the truth of nature,” i. e.  
 a real man\*.

Chriſt being ſo frequently called *a man* in the goſpel hiſtory, is, on this account, very properly urged by the chriſtian Fathers, as an argument againſt this doctrine of the Gnoſtics. Thus, in anſwer to Valentinus, who held that Chriſt had a kind of ſpiritual fleſh, Tertullian obſerves, that then he would not have been called *a man*, as he repeatedly is, or have been ſo deno-

\* Πρωτὴ μὲν ἐν αἰῶνα καὶ μεγίστη, τὸ *Σάρκα αὐτὸν περιεβλήσθαι*, καὶ βεβλήσθαι καὶ τῆς τούτου, καὶ τῆς μέλα ταῦτα πτωχασσάσθαι πωλείας, οἱ ἔσθια τις ἐστίν, ἔδὲ σχῆμα ἀπλῶς τὸ ὀρωμένον, ἀλλ' ἀληθεῖα φύσεως.  
 Hom. 32. vol. I. p. 408.

minated by himself; as when he said, *ye seek to kill me, a man, who has told you the truth* \*. This argument of Tertullian makes equally against any doctrine that supposes Christ to have been, in any respect, different from, or more than, another man, and therefore would have carried him farther than he intended. Basil says, “there was no occasion for his being born of a virgin, if the flesh which was to contain God was not to be of the mass of Adam †.”

But the most serious objection to this part of the Gnostic system is, that if Christ had not proper flesh and blood, and therefore was not properly *a man*, he had not the *feelings* of a man, and therefore he

\* Licuit et Valentino ex privilegio hæretico, carnem Christi spiritalem comminisci. Quidvis eam fingere potuit, quisquis humanam credere noluit; quando (quod ad omnes dictum est) si humana non fuit, nec ex homine; non video ex qua substantia ipse se Christus hominem et filium hominis pronunciarit. Nunc autem vultis occidere hominem, veritatem ad vos loquutum. De Carne Christi scæ. 14. Opera, p. 319.

† Τις δε χρεια της αγιας παρθενι, ει μη εκ της φυραματος τη Αδαμ εμελεν η θεοφορος σαρκε προσλαμβανουσα. Ep. 65. Opera, vol. 3: p. 104.

is no proper example to us, especially in his sufferings and death, with respect to which his example is more particularly proposed to us; and in time of persecution this consideration was of the greatest consequence. As Origen says, “if Christ “suffered nothing in his death, how can his “example be of any use to those who suffer “for righteousness sake, if he only seemed “to suffer, but really felt nothing\*.”

Sometimes, therefore, the whole scheme of christianity is spoken of as defeated by this doctrine of the Gnostics, so that they are ranked with unbelievers, merely in consequence of not believing the reality of Christ’s sufferings and death. Thus in the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, he says, “If, “as some atheists, that is, unbelievers, say, “he suffered in appearance only, it being “only an appearance, why am I bound, “why do I glory in fighting with beasts?

\* Αλλα κ' ει, ως φησιν ο Κελσ<sup>ος</sup> μητ' αλγεινον τι μητ' αναρον τω Ιησ<sup>ω</sup> καλα τον καιρον τειλον εγιγενετο, πως αν οι μελα ταυτα παραδειγματι τε υπομενεν τα δι ευσεβειαν επικονα εδυναντο χρησασθαι Ιησ<sup>ω</sup>, μη παροντι μιν τα ανθρωπινα, μνον δε δοξαλι πεπονθεναι, Ad Cels. lib. 2. p. 77.

“ I die

“ I die in vain \*.” Alluding to the same doctrine, he likewise says, “ I endure all things, he who is a perfect man strengthening me †;” meaning, probably, that he strengthened himself by the example of Christ. Accordingly, we find that, in general, the Gnostics avoided persecution. But before I consider their maxims and conduct in this respect, I shall cite what we find in the New Testament against the opinion of Christ’s not having a real human body.

In whatever light the apostles saw this doctrine, it is evident, that they were much alarmed at it. This is particularly clear with respect to the apostle John; but Paul seems to allude to this tenet of the Gnostics in 2 Cor. xi. 4. where he speaks of the false teachers as preaching another Jesus than him that he had preached. For in this sense the same phrase is used by some of the

\* *Εἰ δὲ ὡς περ τινες ἀδελφοὶ οὐκ εἰς, τέλεισιν ἀπίσται, λέγουσιν τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτὸν, αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸ δοκεῖν ἐγὼ τί δεδέμαι· τί δὲ εὐχόμεσθα θρηνημαχίᾳ· ὄψεσθαι ἐν ἀποδησίᾳ.* Ad. Trall. sect. 10. p. 24.

† *Πάντα ὑπομένω, αὐτὸς με ἐνδυναμῶν,* τὸ τελείῳ ἀνδρὶ πᾶσι γενόμενος. Ad. Smyrn. sect. 36. p. 36.

early

early christian writers, and indeed it does not appear that he could have any other meaning; as in no other sense did any persons ever preach what could be called *another Jesus*. But a Jesus not consisting of flesh and blood, or a Jesus whose soul had been a super-angelic spirit, was indeed a very different Jesus from him that Paul had preached, viz. a man like himself, and only distinguished by the peculiar presence and power of God accompanying him. Also, what could Peter mean by saying that those who *brought in damnable heresies*, 2 Pet. ii. 1. *denying the Lord that bought them*, but the same that Paul meant by *preaching another Jesus*, which implied a denial of the true Jesus? If these persons had been apostates from christianity, they would not have been classed with *heretics*, or have been mentioned as intermixed with christians.

There can be no doubt, however, with respect to the meaning of the apostle John; as the bare recital of the passages from his writings will evince. The doctrine of the Gnostics concerning the person of Christ was so offensive to him, and it was so much  
upon

upon his mind, that he begins his first epistle, seemingly in a very abrupt manner, with the strongest allusions to it. *That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, i. e. have closely inspected and examined, and our hands have handled, of the word of life (For the life was manifest, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifest to us). That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, &c.*

What could he mean by speaking of Jesus under the figure of *life*, as a person who had been *heard*, *seen*, and even *handled*; so that they had the evidence of all their senses, but that he was really *a man*, had a real *human body*, and not merely the appearance of one; which, it is universally allowed, was an opinion that was entertained by many persons in his time. I shall proceed to give other extracts from the writings of John, in which he alludes to this doctrine of the Gnostics, and strongly expresses his disapprobation of it.

1 John

1 John iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God. Because many false teachers are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh (or as it might be rendered, that Jesus is Christ come in the flesh) is of God. And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Coming in the flesh, can have no other meaning than having real flesh, which many of the Gnostics said Christ had not; and coming, cannot here imply any pre-existent state, for then the flesh in which he came must have pre-existed.*

2 John 7. *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist. The importance of holding the true doctrine concerning the person of Christ, in opposition to these deceivers, he urges with great emphasis in the following verses. Look to yourselves,*  
1
*that*



*that ye lose not those things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed, is a partaker of his evil deeds.*

Though I do not propose, in this work, to enter into a critical examination of the meaning of particular texts of scripture, yet as it has of late been strongly urged that the phrase *coming in the flesh*, used by John in these passages, has a reference to a pre-existent state of Christ, I shall endeavour to shew that such a construction is ill founded.

It has been said that by this phrase, “ the opinion that Christ was truly a man  
 “ is very awkwardly and unnaturally expressed. The turn of the expression,  
 “ seeming to leading to the notion of a  
 “ being who had his choice of different  
 “ ways of coming ;” and therefore is levelled

“led against the Ebionites as well as the  
“Gnostics.”

On the contrary, I think the expression sufficiently similar to other Jewish phrases, of which we find various examples in the scriptures, and that it may be explained by the phrase *partaker of flesh and blood*, Hebrews ii. 14. If the word *coming* must necessarily mean *coming from heaven*, and imply a pre-existent state, John the Baptist must have pre-existed: for our Saviour uses that expression concerning him, as well as concerning himself, Matt. xi. 18, 19. *John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say he hath a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, &c.* It may also be asserted, with more certainty still, concerning all the apostles that they pre-existed; for our Saviour, in his prayer for them, respecting their mission, makes use of the term *world*, which is not found in 1 John iv. 2. where he says, John xvii. 18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world.*

The phrase *coming in the flesh*, in my opinion, refers very naturally to the doc-

trine of the Gnostics, who supposed Christ to be a super-angelic spirit, which descended from heaven, and entered into the body of Jesus. The phrase *he that shall come, or who was to come* (his coming having been foretold by the prophets) appears to have been familiar to the Jews, to denote the Messiah: but with them it certainly did not imply any coming down from heaven, because they had no such idea concerning their Messiah.

Besides, there is no trace in the epistle of John of any more than *one heresy*. He neither expressly says, nor hints, that there were *two*; and part of his description of this one heresy evidently points to that of the Gnostics; and this heresy was as different as possible from that of the Ebionites. The early writers who speak of them mention them as *two opposite heresies*, existing in the same early period; so that it is very improbable *a priori*, that “the same expression should be equally levelled at them both.” Gnosticism, therefore, being certainly condemned by the apostle, and not the doctrine of the Ebionites,

I conclude, that in the latter, which is allowed to have existed in his time, he saw nothing worthy of censure; but that it was the doctrine which he himself had taught. If this apostle had thought otherwise, why did he not censure it unequivocally, as those who are called orthodox now do, and with as much severity.

Tertullian maintained, that by those who denied that *Christ was come in the flesh*, John meant the Gnostics, though he says that by those who denied that *Jesus was the Son of God*, he meant the Ebionites\*. He had no idea that the former expression only could include both. But as the Gnostics maintained that *Jesus* and the *Christ* were different persons, the latter having come from heaven, and being the Son of God, whereas Jesus was the son of man only, the expression of *Jesus being the Son of God* is as directly opposed to the doctrine of the Gnostics as that of *Christ coming in the flesh*.

As a proof has been required that the phrase *coming in the flesh* is descriptive of

\* De Prescriptione Hæreticorum, sect. 33. p. 214.

the Gnostic heresy only, and not of the unitarian doctrine also, I would observe, that it is so used in the epistle of Polycarp, the disciple of John. In a passage in this epistle, in which the writer evidently alludes to the Gnostics only, he introduces this very phrase, *coming in the flesh* \*. “ Being zealous of what is good, abstaining  
 “ from all offence, and from false brethren,  
 “ and from those who bear the name of  
 “ Christ in hypocrisy, and who deceive vain  
 “ men. For whosoever does not confess  
 “ that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he  
 “ is antichrist, and whosoever does not  
 “ confess his suffering upon the cross, is  
 “ from the devil; and whosoever perverts  
 “ the oracles of God to his own interests,  
 “ and says, that there shall be neither any  
 “ resurrection, nor judgment, he is the  
 “ first-born of satan. Wherefore, leaving  
 “ the vanity of many, and their false doc-  
 “ trines, let us return to the word that  
 “ was delivered from the beginning.”

Had this writer proceeded no farther than the second clause, in which he men-

\* See sect. 6, 7. Abp. Wake's translation, p. 55-  
 tions

tions those who did not believe that Christ suffered upon the cross, it might have been supposed, that he alluded to *two* classes of men, and that the latter were different from those who denied that he came in the flesh. But as he goes on to mention a third circumstance, viz. the denial of the resurrection, and we are sure that those were not a third class of persons, it is evident that he alluded to no more than one and the same kind of persons by all the three characters. I conclude, therefore, that the apostle John, from whom the writer of this epistle had this phrase, used it in the same sense, and meant by it only those persons who believed that Christ was not truly man, i. e. the Gnostics.

It has been said that “ the attempt to  
 “ assign a reason why the Redeemer should  
 “ be a man, implies both that he might  
 “ have been, without partaking of the hu-  
 “ man nature, and by consequence that,  
 “ in his own proper nature, he was origi-  
 “ nally something different from man; and  
 “ that there might have been an expecta-  
 “ tion that he would make his appearance

“in some form above the human.” But it is certainly quite sufficient to account for the apostle’s using that phrase *coming in the flesh*, that in his time there actually existed an opinion that Christ had no real flesh, and was not truly a man, but a being of a higher order, which was precisely the doctrine of the Gnostics. That before the appearance of the Messiah, any persons expected that he would, or might come in a form above the human, is highly improbable.

“A reason,” it is said, “why a man should be a man, one would not expect in a sober man’s discourse.” But certainly, it was very proper to give a reason why one who was *not* thought to be properly a man, was really so; which is what the apostle has done.

The very circumstantial account that John has given of the *blood* which issued from the wound in our Saviour’s side, could hardly have any other meaning, than to contradict the doctrine of the Gnostics, that he had not real flesh and blood, John xix. 34. *But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced*

*pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.* What could be the meaning of this remarkably strong asseveration, but to assure the world that Jesus had real blood, like other men? To the same thing he probably alludes, when he mentions the *blood* by which Christ came, as well as the *water*, 1. John v. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood.* Again, and probably with the same view, he says, 1 John v. 8. *There be three that bear record, the spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one; the spirit and the water, referring probably to his baptism, and the blood to his death.*

With respect to the other articles of the Gnostic creed concerning the person of Christ, viz. that *Jesus* was one being, and *the Christ* another, and that the proper *Christ* came into Jesus at his baptism, John also bears his strongest testimony against it; and he lays no less stress on a right faith in this respect than in the other, 1 John ii.



21. *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lye is of the truth. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* This also may explain what Peter meant by *denying the Lord that bought them*, as it may be supposed that he meant denying Jesus to be the Christ. 1 John iv. 15. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God (which is equivalent to being the Christ) God dwelleth in him, and he in God; chap. v. 5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.* From the conclusion of John's gospel we may infer what several of the ancients have asserted, viz. that he wrote it with a particular view to refute the Gnostics. Chap. xx. 31. *These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.*

## SECTION

S E C T I O N VI.

*Of the Doctrine of the Gnostics with respect to Martyrdom.*

AN obvious consequence of denying the reality of Christ's flesh and blood was, that he never really *suffered*. This, indeed, the Gnostics contended for, as his prerogative and excellence; thinking all the affections of the flesh reproachful to a being of his high rank and natural dignity. Some of them, rather than suppose that Christ really suffered, said that it was not even Jesus, but Cimon of Cyrene, who carried the cross after him, that was hung upon it; and that Christ, seeing this from a distance, laughed at the mistake of his enemies, and then returned to his Father who had sent him. This notion is by Theodoret ascribed to Basilides\*.

\* Παθειν δε τῶν ἑδαίως λέγει, ἀλλὰ Σίμωνα τὸν Κυρηναῖον υπομειναι τὸ πᾶθος νομισθέντα εἶναι χριστὸν· τὸν δὲ χριστὸν πορρωθεν ὁρῶντα, γελῶν τῶν Ἰσθαίων τὴν ἀπεινοίαν, εἰς ὑπερον, ἀπέλθειν ἄρος τοῦ ἀποστειλῶντα. Hær. Fab. lib. I. cap. 4. vol. 4. p. 195.



he might hold, without denying the obligation to die in the cause of truth,

According to Epiphanius, also, Basilides held that martyrdom was unnecessary\*. In the passage quoted above from the epistle of Polycarp, there is an allusion to this doctrine of the Gnostics, “ Every one who shall not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is antichrist, and whosoever shall not confess the martyrdom of the cross is of the devil, and whosoever shall pervert the oracles of God to his own lusts, and say there is neither resurrection, nor judgment, is the first-born of Satan †.” Here is an enumeration of the principal, at least, the most obnoxious tenets of the Gnostics, who were the only heretics in that early age.

In consequence of this maxim concerning martyrdom, the Gnostics are said to

\* Διδασκει δε παλιν ἡ ἀνάρεττει, φασικων μὴ δεῖν μαρτυρεῖν. Hær: 24. vol. I. p. 71.

† Πᾶς γὰρ, ὅς ἀν μὴ ὁμολογῆ Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐσθῶνθαι. Ἀνιχριστὸς ἐστὶ· ἢ ὅς ἀν μὴ ὁμολογῆ τὸ μαρτυρεῖν τῆ σαυρῆ, ἐκ τῆ διαβολῆς ἐστὶ· ἢ ὅς ἀν μεθόδευτ τὰ λόγια τῆ κυρίας πρὸς τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας, ἢ λέγη μὴτε ἀναστασιν, μὴτε κρίσιν εἶναι, εἰθ' ἀπειθεὶς ἐστὶ τῆ Σατανα. Ep. Ad. Eph. sect. 7. p. 187.

have

have made no difficulty of eating things sacrificed to idols, though nothing can be more expressly forbidden than this practice is in the New Testament; as it makes one of the four articles of things prohibited to the Gentile converts by an assembly of all the apostles, is most pointedly argued against by Paul, in his epistles to the Corinthians, and is likewise severely reprehended in the book of Revelation.

In the dialogue of Justin Martyr, Trypho says, that “many who were called christians ate of things sacrificed to idols, and said there was no harm in it.” But it appears by Justin’s answer, that they were Gnostics\*. Irenæus says of the Valentini-ans, that, “without distinction, they ate of things sacrificed to idols, not thinking themselves defiled by them, and were the first to attend the feasts in honour of the heathen gods †.” The Nicolaitans also

\* Και ο τρυφων, κ̅ι̅ μ̅η̅ν̅ πολλὰς̅ των̅ τον̅ Ιη̅σου̅ λε̅γου̅των̅ ο̅μολο̅γειν, κ̅ι̅ λε̅γο̅με̅νων̅ χ̅ρισ̅τι̅αν̅ων̅, π̅υ̅ν̅θ̅α̅νο̅μα̅ι̅ ε̅δ̅ι̅ειν̅ τ̅α̅ ε̅ιδ̅ω̅λο̅θ̅υ̅λα̅, κ̅ι̅ μ̅η̅δ̅εν̅ ε̅κ̅ τ̅η̅ς̅ β̅λα̅π̅τ̅ε̅σ̅θ̅αι̅ λε̅γειν. P. 207.

† Και̅ γ̅αρ̅ ε̅ιδ̅ω̅λο̅θ̅υ̅λα̅ α̅δ̅ι̅α̅φο̅ρω̅ς̅ ε̅δ̅ι̅ε̅σι̅ μ̅η̅δ̅ε̅ μ̅ο̅λ̅η̅ν̅ε̅σ̅θ̅αι̅ υ̅π̅̅ α̅υ̅τ̅η̅ς̅ η̅γ̅γ̅μ̅ε̅νοι̅. κ̅ι̅ ε̅π̅ι̅ π̅α̅σ̅σ̅α̅ν̅ ε̅ο̅β̅η̅σ̅α̅μ̅ο̅ν̅ τ̅ων̅ ε̅θ̅ν̅ων̅ τ̅ε̅ρ̅ψ̅ι̅ν̅ ε̅ι̅ς̅ τ̅ι̅μ̅η̅ν̅ τ̅ων̅ ε̅ιδ̅ω̅λων̅ γ̅ι̅ν̅ο̅μ̅ε̅νη̅ν̅ π̅α̅ρ̅η̅το̅ι̅ σ̅υ̅νη̅α̅σ̅ι̅ν. Lib. I. cap. I. p. 30.

Austin says, sacrificed to idols, and did not oppose the Gentile superstitions\*.

Upon the whole, this doctrine of the non-obligation of martyrdom, and the practice of sacrificing to idols, is so generally laid to the charge of the Gnostics, and it is so consonant to their other principles, that it is impossible not to give some credit to the accounts. It is evident, however, that the charge was not universally true. Some Marcionites, in particular, had so great a value for the gospel, and held the obligation of *truth* so sacred, that they suffered martyrdom rather than renounce their profession of christianity. In Eusebius the Marcionites are said to have boasted of many martyrs †; and particular mention is made by him of one Asclepius, a Marcionite martyr ‡.

\* Hi nec ab iis quæ idolis immolantur cibos suos separant, et alios ritus gentilium superstitionum non advertantur. Catalogus Hær. vol. 6. p. 14.

† Και πρώτοι γε οι απο της Μαρκιωνος αιρεσεως Μαρκιωνισται καλυμμενοι, πλειστας οσους εχειν χριστη μαρτυρας λεγουσιν· αλλα του γε χριστου αυτου καλα αληθειαν εκ ομολογουσι Hill. lib. 5. cap. 16. p. 232.

‡ De Martyribus Palestinæ, cap. 10. p. 426.

We may learn from the New Testament, that some persons professing christianity did not, for some time at least, refrain from eating things sacrificed to idols, or from fornication. But though this might be from want of consideration, rather than from principle, the apostle Paul does not fail to expostulate with them with peculiar earnestness on the subject. See 1 Cor. x. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 16. See also what he observes concerning the necessity of *all who would walk godly in Christ Jesus, suffering persecution*, 2 Tim. iii. 10. with the enumeration of his own sufferings in several places, which seems to allude to the contrary principles and practices of others.

There are also persons characterized by *holding the doctrine of Balaam*, both in the second epistle of Peter, the epistle of Jude, and the book of Revelation; and in this book, chap. ii. 14. they are described as *teaching to eat things sacrificed to idols*, as well as *to commit fornication*. It is probable, that they were all the same class of persons, and that they were Gnostics, who held these principles. The particular commendation

commendation given to the martyr Antipas, in this book, ch. ii. 13. and the reproof given to the church of Thyatira, for *suffering a person called Jezebel to teach, and to seduce persons to eat things sacrificed to idols*, chap. ii. 20. shews that there were of these Gnostics when that book was written.

Also the solemn promise at the conclusion of each of the epistles to the seven churches, of especial favour to those who should *overcome*, plainly points out the obligation that christians were under to maintain the truth at the hazard of their lives. Nothing can more clearly prove this obligation on all christians, than our Lord's own doctrine and example, Matt. x. 39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.* But his own death, with respect to which we are particularly exhorted to follow his example, is the strongest sanction that he could give to his precept on this head.

Indeed, nothing but the sense of this obligation, to maintain the profession of our faith in all events, could have secured the prevalence of christianity in the world,  
and



and have enabled it to triumph over all the obstacles that it had to encounter. Nothing else could have been so well calculated to give mankind in general such a full persuasion of the *sincerity* of christians, and of their high sense of the importance of the gospel, and consequently, to procure a proper attention to its principles, and gain converts to it.

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## SECTION VII.

*The Gnostics disbelieved the Resurrection.*

**A**LL the Gnostics, without exception, from those who made their appearance in the time of the apostles, down to the Manicheans, disbelieved the resurrection. They held *matter* and the *body* in such abhorrence, that they could not persuade themselves that the *soul* was to be incumbered with it any longer than in this life. But they did not, therefore, give up all belief of future rewards and punishments. They believed the immortality of the soul;  
and

and that the soul, divested of the body, would be rewarded or punished according to the actions performed in it. Without this there could never have been any martyrs at all among them, as we have seen that there were among the Marcionites.

However, as the doctrine of a *resurrection* makes so great a figure in the christian scheme, the Gnostics, or at least some of them, did not venture to deny it in words; but they said it was a figurative expression, and either related to the moral change produced in the minds of men by the preaching of the gospel, or a rising from this mortal life to an immortal one, after the death of the body. According to Epiphanius, Hierax said that the resurrection related to the soul, not to the body\*, and the Manicheans said that the death of which Paul wrote was a state of sin, and the resurrection a freedom from sin†.

\* Βαλέαι γὰρ καὶ εἰς τὴν σὰρκα μὴ ἀναστῆναι τὸ παραπαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ψυχὴν μονώλειαν, πνευματικὴν δὲ τὴν ἀνάστασιν φασκεῖ: Hær. 67. vol. i. p. 709.

† Θανάτου, εὐλαυθα φασί, ἔθεν ἄλλο λέγει ὁ παῦλος ἢ τὸ εἰν ἁμαρτία γινεσθαι, καὶ ἀνάστασιν τὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπαλλαγῆναι. Chrysostom, in I Cor. 15. Opera. vol. xi, p. 664.

This must have been the doctrine taught by Hymenæus and Philetus, whose words Paul says, 2 Tim. ii. 17. *did eat as doth a canker, and who erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is passed already, and overthrew the faith of some.* It is possible, also, that Paul might allude to this doctrine of the Gnostics, when, in the epistle to the Colossians, after speaking of their *voluntary humility, worshipping of angels, intruding into things which they had not seen, vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds,* ch. ii. 18 (which are evident characters of the Gnostics) he added ver. 20. *If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances;* as if, arguing with them on their own principles, he had said, *If the death from which we are to rise, be merely a death of sin, why do you continue to live as men of this world only? And again, ch. iii. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,* i. e. If, as you pretend, the resurrection be passed already, and you be actually risen again

again with Christ, live in a manner agreeable to this new and better life.

But in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle argues at large against the doctrine of the false teachers in that church, who held that the dead would not rise; and therefore he proves the doctrine of an universal resurrection from that of Christ, and answers the objections that were made to it from its seeming natural impossibility. And it evidently appears from the whole tenor of the apostle's discourse on this subject, as well as from his consolatory address to the Thessalonians, on the death of their christian friends, that he had no expectation of any future life at all but on the doctrine of a resurrection. *If the dead rise not, he says, 1 Cor. xv. 16. then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* And again, ver. 32. *If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.* In the whole

discourse he makes no account of, he does not even mention, their doctrine of happiness or misery without the body.

But the most extraordinary circumstance is that, after this positive assertion, and copious illustration of the doctrine of the resurrection, it should still continue to be denied by the Gnostics, who were not without respect for his authority and writings. They even pretended that his writings were in favour of their principles. Bardesanes appealed to the scriptures, and proposed to abide by them\*. The chief advantage which they imagined they had from the scriptures on this subject, was from its being said by Paul, that *flesh and blood could not inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. xv. 50. Ambrose says that “the heretics who deny the resurrection urge its being said, that they do not rise in the flesh †.” The Marcionites also pre-

\* Το των Χριστιανων δογμα πιστει κ' γραφαις συνεστηκε· Χρη εν απο γραφων, η πεισαι, η πεισθησαι. *Contra Marcionitas*, p. 106.

† Sicuti illi hæretici qui resurrectionem carnis negant, ad diciendas animas simplicium, dicunt, his quia in carne non resurgant. *De Divinitate Filii*, lib. 1. cap. 3. *Opera*, vol. 4. p. 279.

tended

tended to prove from the scriptures that the body would not rise again, “because the prophets and apostles never mentioned flesh or blood in a future state, but the soul only. David,” they said, “speaks of his soul being delivered from death. Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, &c.\*” They also argued from *God’s giving it a body as it pleased him†.*

It seems, therefore, that they thought that the gross body being dropped in the grave, the soul would be clothed with something which, though it might be called *a body*, was of an ethereal and subtile nature, free from all the imperfections of the present body. And in this they have, in some degree, the authority of the apostle. But then, they held that whatever the change was, it took place at death, and that what was

\* Πείσω σε απο γραφωων, οτι εις προφηται, εις Αποστολοι μνημων εποησαντο σαρκος η αιματος, αλλα ψυχης μονης, ην κ’ ηνυχοηλο σωσαι. Και πρωτον μιν ο Δαβιδ· οτι ερρητω, φησι, την ψυχην με εκ θανατου. Origen Contra Marcionitas, p. 136.

† Ου τελο το σωμα λεγει ανιστασθαι, αλλ’ ελερον, απο τε λεγειν· ο θεος διδωσιν αυτω σωμα, καθως ηδελησεν. Ibid. p. 143.

committed to the ground always remained there; whereas nothing could give any propriety even to the term *resurrection*, if the body that died did not live again, how improbable soever it may appear to us. If nothing of *that which dies* is to appear again, in any future period of our existence, there may be a *new creation* of men, but there cannot be any *proper resurrection*. It seems to have been in opposition to any other resurrection than that of a *proper body*, that, in the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, mention is made of the resurrection as being *fleshly, as well as spiritual*\*.

As the resurrection was denied, or explained away, by the Gnostics in the age of the apostles, and they appear, from other circumstances to have been Jews, it seems that their philosophy had prevailed over the principles of their former religion. This is the less to be wondered at, as the Sadducees, a considerable sect among the

\* Εν σωματι Ιησὺν χριστὸν, καὶ τῆ σαρκὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ αἵματι, παθεὶν τε καὶ ἀναστῆναι, σαρκῶν τε καὶ πνευματικῶν, &c. Ad. Smyrn. sect. 12. p. 38.

Jews,

Jews, and sufficiently attached to their religion in other respects, did likewise disbelieve the resurrection. But then they disbelieved a future state in any form, which the christian Gnostics did not.

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S E C T I O N VIII.

*Of the Immoralities of the Gnostics, and their Sentiments with Respect to Marriage, &c.*

THE contempt with which the Gnostics treated the *body*, was capable of two opposite applications, and would therefore naturally operate according as persons were previously disposed, or as they were influenced by other principles: For either they would think to purify and elevate the soul by neglecting or macerating the body, rigorously abstaining from all carnal gratifications; or, considering the affections of the body as bearing no relation to those of the soul, they might think it was of no great or lasting consequence whether they



indulged the body or not. It is well known that principles similar to theirs have had this twofold operation in later ages, leading some to austerity, and others to sensual indulgence.

That the principles of the Gnostics had, in fact, the worst of those influences in the age of the apostles, their writings sufficiently evidence; and though it is probable, that the irregularities of the Gnostics were in a great measure repressed by these writings, so that we hear less complaint of these things afterwards; yet charges of this kind are so generally and so strongly urged, and they are so probable in themselves, as to be entitled to some degree of credit. In the treatise ascribed to Hermaſ, we read that some thought “as the body was to perish, it might safely be abused to lust\*.” Eusebius says, that “the Nicolaitans, co-temporary with Cerinthus, but a sect of no long continuance, were said to have

\* *Atque etiam vide ne quando persuadeatur tibi interire corpus hoc, et abutaris eo in libidine aliqua.* Lib. 3. sect. 7. p. 106.

“ their

“ their women in common, on the maxims  
“ that it was lawful to abuse the flesh \*.”

But, perhaps, the most unexceptionable evidence in this case may be that of a heathen philosopher; and Plotinus represents the Gnostics as ridiculing all virtue. But as he intimates that the goodness of their dispositions might over-rule the influence of their principles, it is possible that the Gnostics themselves might deny that supposed tendency of their doctrines †. It was also generally said, and probably with some foundation, that the calumnies of the heathens against the christians, as addicted to criminal indulgences, were occasioned by the practices of the Gnostics, who called

\* Ακολούθου γαρ είναι φασί την πράξιν ταύτην εκείνη τη φωνη τη ολι παραχρασθαι τη σαρκι δει. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 25. p. 123.

† Ο δε λογος υιός, ει νεανικώτερον, τον της προναϊας Κυριον, κ' αυτην την παροικίαν, μεμψαμένους. κ' παλαις νομοις της ενλαυδα αλιμασίας, κ' την αρετήν την εκ παλαιοσ τε χρόνισ ανευρημένην, το, τε σωφρονειν τείλο εν γελωλι θεμενος, ινα μηδεν καλον ενλαυδα δη οφθειη υπαρχον. ανειλε το, τε σωφρονειν, κ' την εν τοις ηθεσι συμφυ τον δικαιοσύνην, την τελυμένην εκ λογυ κ' ασκησεωσ, κ' ολωσ καθ α σπυδαωσ ανδρωπιθ αυ γενόλο. ως τε αυλοισ καλαλενιπεσθαι την ηδονην κ' το περι αυλυσ, κ' το ε κοινον προς αλλυσ ανδρωπιωσ. κ' το της χρειασ μονον, ει μηλυ τη φυσει τη αυλυ κρειτλων ειη των λογων τειλων. En. lib. 9. cap. 13. p. 213.

themselves

themselves christians, and were not distinguished from other christians by the heathens\*.

That those who are considered as *heretics* in the New Testament were licentious in their manners, appears from a variety of passages. The apostle Paul, applying to his own times the prophecies concerning the apostacy of the latter days, speaks, (2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.) of some who, *having the form of godliness, denied the power of it*, being addicted to almost every vice, which he there enumerates. He expresses this with equal clearness, chap. iv. 3. *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but, after their own lusts, they will keep to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

But the most shocking picture of the irregularities of some professing christians, though, perhaps, in a state of separation

\* Τοις δὲ ἀπίστοις ἐθνεσιν πολλὴν παρέχειν κατὰ τὴν θεῶν λόγῳ δυσφημίας περιβασίαν τῆς ἐξ αὐτῶν φημὸς εἰς τὴν τῶν πάντων χριστιανῶν ἐθνῶν διαβολὴν καταχρῆμενης. Euseb. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 7.

from those who were termed catholic, is drawn by Peter in his second epistle, and also by Jude. It is evident, that they are the same persons who are described by them both; and one feature in the account of Jude seems to fix the charge upon the Gnostics. He says, ver. 3. *It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye would earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old pre-ordained to this condemnation; turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. This denying of God and of Christ in Jude, the denying the Lord that bought them of Peter, and the denying that Christ is come in the flesh, or that Jesus is the Christ, of John, were probably phrases of the same import, as they nearly resemble each other, and then there can be no doubt of the persons so described being Gnostics.*

It is possible also that, by *denying the only Lord God*, Jude might mean their ascribing the making of the world to some other being than the only true God, which was the *blasphemy*

*phemy against God* with which the Gentile Gnostics were charged ; though this is the only circumstance that can lead us to think that the apostles had to do with any such Gnostics. But this is very possible, as there is no circumstance in this epistle that shews these particular Gnostics to have been Jews ; no hint being given of their bigotted attachment to the law of Moses. If the Gnostics that Jude alludes to were Gentiles, this may also have been the case with those of whom John writes. That they were the same description of persons there can be no doubt ; and even John says nothing of their attachment to the law.

Also, the same persons whom John characterizes, by saying, they denied that *Jesus is the Christ*, and that *Christ is come in the flesh*, he represents, † John iv. 5. as *of the world*, and *speaking of the world* ; and says that *therefore the world heareth them*. It was, probably, in opposition to the licentious maxims of the Gnostics, that John enlarges so much on the moral influence of true christianity in his first epistle ; as † John iii. 3, &c. *Every man that hath*  
*this*

*this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doth righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

Here seems to be an allusion to licentious principles, as well as practices. The *deeds of the Nicolaitans*, who were Gnostics, mentioned Rev. ii. 6. were probably some impurities, or vicious practices; and as it is sometimes called the *doctrine of the Nicolaitans*, as ver. 15. that is spoken of with such abhorrence, it is probable that they vindicated their practices by their principles. Besides, vices would hardly be laid by the apostles to the charge of men, as known by a particular name, if they were not vices avowed by those who bore that name.

In general, however, it must be acknowledged, that the Gnostics, at least those of a later period, were advocates for bodily austerity and mortification; thinking the body, in all cases, a clog to the soul, and that all sensual indulgence, even such as was deemed lawful by others, had an unfavourable operation. Saturninus, as Theodoret says, taught that “ marriage was the doctrine of the devil \*.” And we may clearly perceive, from Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians, and other parts of his writings, that similar principles were inculcated by the false teachers of his day. Hence, probably, the questions about marriage proposed to him by the christians at Corinth, and his decision, Heb. xiii. 4. that *marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled.*

That he might allude to the Gnostics in the epistle to the Hebrews, is not impossible, as they were Jewish Gnostics that he had to do with, and they were strenuous advocates for the law of Moses; and against that part of their system much of the epistle

\* Τον δε γαμον εις πρωτος τη διαβολη διδασκαλιαν ωνομασε.  
Hær. Fab. lib. 1. cap. 3. Opera, vol. 4. p. 194.

is directed. But towards the conclusion, he seems to descant upon other parts of it ; and presently after the above-mentioned observation concerning marriage, he says, *Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines*, which, no doubt, alludes to the Gnostics, as in similar expressions, he certainly does refer to them in various parts of his writings.

This doctrine of the prohibition of marriage, it is evident, that Paul thought very ill of, by his making it one of the characters of the *great apostacy* of the latter times, 1 Tim. iv. 3. *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, &c.*

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S E C T I O N IX.

*Of the Gnostic Teachers giving Lectures for Money.*

THE Gnostics were not only persons addicted to the philosophy of their times, (many of them being, as we may presume from this circumstance, in the higher classes of  
of



of life) but having had the advantage of a liberal education, many of them had studied eloquence, and, like the philosophers of antiquity, gave lectures, or harrangues, for money. It has been seen in the passages quoted from Origen and others, that the preaching of the Gnostics was said to be calculated to please, rather than to edify their hearers, which was probably done by delivering such discourses as Plato, and other philosophers did, who received money from their pupils. To this custom there are many allusions in the New Testament, especially in the two epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, in which he opposes his own conduct (he having worked with his own hands among them, to maintain himself, while he preached to them *gratis*) to that of these teachers, who *made a gain of them*.

They are thus described Titus i. 9. *that he (viz. the bishop) may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort, and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things*

*things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. Those also who, Peter says (2 Pet. ii. 1, &c.) brought in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, did likewise through coveteousness with feigned words, make merchandise of their bearers.*

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S E C T I O N X.

*Of the refractory Disposition of some of the Gnostics.*

**T**H E R E is another circumstance which distinguished the Jewish Gnostics of the apostles times, and perhaps those of no other, which was the high sense they had of the dignity of their nation, their aversion to the Roman government, and indeed to all subordination. On this account the apostles frequently urged the necessity of a due subjection to superiors, and the propriety of prayer being made for all men, as for kings, &c. This Paul particularly enjoins Timothy with respect to the church

at Ephesus, where there were many Gnostics, 1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority. The same charge he gives to Titus (chap. iii. 1) Put them in mind to be subject to principalities, and powers, to obey magistrates, &c. Peter also speaks of them (2 Pet. ii. 10) as despisers of government, presumptuous, self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of dignities; and ver. 19. as promising men liberty, Jude also describes them (ver. 8) as despising dominion, and speaking evil of dignities.*

This promise of liberty they might extend to the Gentile christians; and for this reason the apostle Paul might think it necessary to urge the obligation of christian slaves to continue in subjection to their masters, 1 Tim. vi. 1. *Let as many slaves as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God, and his doctrine be not blasphemed.—If any man teach otherwise (from which it is evident, that some had done so) and consent not to wholesome words, even to the words of our*  
Lord

*Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions, and strifes of words, &c.* This circumstance clearly marks the Gnostics, and therefore makes it highly probable, that the other doctrine, concerning freedom from servitude, was taught by the same persons.

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S E C T I O N XI.

*Of public Worship among the Gnostics.*

AS the Gnostics were philosophical and speculative people, and affected refinement, they did not make much account of *public worship*, or of positive institutions of any kind. They are said to have had no order in their churches. We do not hear much of their having regular bishops among them; and, making themselves by this means much less conspicuous than other christians, they were not so

much exposed to persecution, even though they had not been disposed to make improper compliances in order to avoid it.

A particular account of the disorderly state of church discipline among the Gnostics may be seen in Tertullian. He describes it as “without dignity, authority, or strictness. It is uncertain,” he says, “who is a catechumen, or who one of the faithful, as they all attend the worship, hear, and pray in common. They are all conceited, and promise to instruct others. They are proficient before they are properly catechumens. How noisy are their women, how they have the assurance to teach, to dispute, exorcise, undertake cures, and perhaps baptize. Their ordinations are hasty, light, and inconstant. Sometimes they advance mere novices, sometimes persons engaged in secular business, and sometimes apostates from us. To-day one man is the bishop, to-morrow another. To-day he is a deacon, who to-morrow will be a reader. To-day he is a presbyter, who  
“to-morrow

“ to-morrow will be a layman ; for they  
 “ impose on the laity the functions of the  
 “ clergy. They have no reverence for  
 “ their clergy. Many of them have no  
 “ churches, &c.\*

In an epistle ascribed to Ignatius, we read that “ some abstained from the Eu-  
 “ charist, and from prayer, because they did  
 “ not acknowledge the Eucharist to be the  
 “ flesh of the body of our Saviour Jesus  
 “ Christ, which suffered for our sins, and  
 “ which the father in his goodness raised

\* Non omittam ipsius etiam conversationis hæreticæ descriptionem quam futilis, quam terrena, quam humana sit, sine gravitate, sine autoritate, sine disciplina, ut fidei suæ congruens. In primis quis catechumenus, quis fidelis, incertum est ; pariter adeunt, pariter audiunt, pariter orant.—Omnes tument, omnes scientiam pollicentur. Ante sunt perfecti catechumeni quam edocti. Ipsæ mulieres hæreticæ quam procaces, quæ audeant docere, contendere, exorcismos agere, curationes repromittere, forsitan et tingere. Ordinationes eorum temerariæ, leves, inconstantes. Nunc neophytos conlocant, nunc sæculo obstrictos, nunc apostatas nostros. Alius hodie episcopus, cras alius ; hodie diaconus qui cras lector ; hodie presbyter qui cras laicus ; nam et laicis sæcerdotalia munera injungunt.—Nec suis præfidibus reverentiam noverint. Plerique nec ecclesias habent, &c. De Præscriptione, sect. 41. p. 217.

“ up.” “ It is proper,” therefore,” he says, “ to abstain from such, nor speak of them in private, or publicly, but attend to the prophets, and especially the gospel, in which the suffering (of Christ) is manifest to us, and the resurrection completed, and avoid divisions as the principal beginning of evils\*.” Clemens Alexandrinus speaks of the heresy of Prodicus who rejected prayer †. Origen also says there “ are some who say that men ought not to pray, admitting of no external signs, using neither baptism, nor the Lord’s supper; perverting the scriptures, saying that something else than prayer is meant by them ‡.”

\* Ευχαριστίας ἢ προσευχῆς ἀπεχθόναι, δια το μη ομολογεῖν τῆν εὐχαριστιαν σαρκὰ εἶναι τῶ σωμάτων ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, τῆν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθεῖσαν, ἢ τῆ χρησὶότητι οὐ πάλιν εὐχρισθῆν.

Πρεπον ἐν ἐστὶν ἀπεχεσθαι τῶν τοιούτων, ἢ μὴτε καὶ ἰδίων περὶ αὐτῶν λαλεῖν, μὴτε κοινῆ· προσεχεῖν δὲ τοῖς προφηταῖς, ἐξαιρείως δὲ τῶ προσηγγελίῳ, ἐν ᾧ το παθῶ ἡμῶν δεδηλώται, ἢ ἡ ἀναστασις τελελειώται· τὸς δὲ μερισμοῦς φευγέτε, ὡς ἀρχὴν κακῶν. Smyr. lect. 7. p. 37.

† Ἐνλαοδα γενόμενος ὑπερμεσδῆν τῶν περὶ τῆ μη δεῖν εὐχεσθαι πρὸς τῶν ἐπεροδοξῶν, τῆς ἐστὶν τῶν ἀμφὶ τῆν Προδικῆς αἵρεσιν παρεισοσθημένων δογματά. Strom. 7. p. 722.

‡ Καὶ περὶ τῆ μη δεῖν εὐχεσθαι δεδηλώται πᾶσι τῶν· ἢ γνῶμης πρὸς τῶν οἱ τὰ αἰσθητά πᾶν ἀναρνεῖς, ἢ μὴτε βασιλισμῶν, μὴτε εὐχαριστίας

As many of the Gnostics thought that Christ had no real body, and therefore had not proper flesh or blood, it should seem that, on this account, when they did celebrate the eucharist, they made no use of *wine*, which represents the blood of Christ, but of *water* only. Clemens Alexandrinus speaks of some who used water only in the eucharist, and they were evidently Gnostics, or heretics who had quitted the church\*. With a view to this, Cyprian orders that wine be used in the eucharist, and not water †. Chrysoftom says, that “ Christ

ευχαριστια χρωμενοι, συκοφαντιζυτες τας γραφας ως κ̅ το ευχεσθαι τ̅λο  
 ⁂ βελωμενας, αλλ̅ ε̅βρον τι σημαυνομενον παρα τ̅λο διδασκωσας. De  
 Oratione, sect. 15.

\* Ἀρ̅ον κ̅ υ̅δωρ εκ̅ επ̅̅ αλλων̅ τινων̅, αλλ̅ η̅ επι̅ των̅ αρ̅ιων̅ κ̅ υ̅δα̅ιν̅  
 κ̅α̅τα̅ την̅ προσφο̅ραν̅, μη̅ κ̅α̅τα̅ τον̅ καν̅ονα̅ της̅ Εκ̅κλησιας̅, χρω̅μενον̅  
 αι̅ρεσεων̅, εμφ̅ανως̅, τα̅πει̅σης̅ της̅ γρα̅φης̅. ει̅σι̅ γαρ̅ οι̅ κ̅ υ̅δωρ̅ ψ̅ιλον̅  
 ευ̅χαρισ̅των̅. Strom. lib. 1. p. 317.

† Admonitos autem nos scias, ut in calice offerendo Dominica traditio fervetur, neque aliud fiat a nobis quam quod pro nobis. Dominus prior fecerit: ut calix qui in commemoratione offertur mixtus vino offeratur. Nam cum dicat Christus, *ego sum vitis vera*, sanguis Christi, non aqua est utique, sed vinum. Non potest videri sanguis ejus, quo redempti et vivificati sumus, esse in calice, quando vinum deficit calici, quo Christi sanguis ostenditur;



“ drank wine after his resurrection, in order  
 “ to eradicate the pernicious heresy of those  
 “ who used water instead of wine in the  
 “ eucharist \*.”

It is not improbable, however, but that many of the Gnostics might decline the use of wine in the celebration of the eucharist, on account of their abstaining from wine altogether, as a part of their system of bodily austerity. Such, says Beausobre, were the principles of the Encratites, who abstained from wine, flesh meat, and marriage †.

We have fewer accounts of what the Gnostics thought or did with respect to *baptism*, but it seems that some of them at least disused it. Tertullian speaks of the Cajanan heresy, as excluding baptism ‡:

qui, scripturarum omnium sacramento ac testimonio, effusus prædicatur: Epist. p. 148.

\* Και τις εγενε εν χ υδωρ επιεν αναστας αλλ' οινον; αλλη αυτην πονεραν προρριζον αναστων. επειδη ε' τινες εισι εν τοις μυστηρις υδατι μεχρημενοι. In Matt. 26. Opera, vol. 7. p. 700.

† Histoire de Manicheisme, vol. 2. p. 724.

‡ Atque adeo nuper conversata istic quedam de Caiana hæresi vipera venenatissima doctrina sua plerosque rapuit, in primis baptismum destruens. De Baptismo, sect. 1. Opera, p. 224.

Valentinus,

Valentinus, Jerom says, pleaded for two baptisms\*. But what he meant by this does not appear. Perhaps he might say that there was a spiritual baptism, as well as a carnal one, and that the former superseded the latter, which is the doctrine of the Quakers.

The Gnostics did not reject the scriptures; but, as I have already shewn, they appealed to them, and defended their doctrines from them. But as they did not consider them as written by any proper inspiration, they seem to have thought themselves at liberty to adopt what they approved, and to neglect the rest; without disputing their genuineness. This, indeed, was not peculiar to them, but seems to have been a liberty taken by other primitive christians, who, living near the times of the great transactions recorded in the gospel history, might think themselves as good judges with respect to them, as those who undertook to write histories. Thus the Ebionites made no public use of any

\* Unum baptisma et contra Valentinum facit, qui duo baptismata esse contendit. In Eph. cap. 4. Opera, vol. 6. p. 177.

other gospel than that of Matthew, though they might easily have had the other gospels, and the rest of the books of the New Testament, translated for their use; and it appears from Jerom, who saw that gospel as used by them, that it was not exactly the same with our copies. It is well known, that their copies of Matthew's gospel had not the story of the miraculous conception; and they also added to the history such circumstances as they thought sufficiently authenticated. No less liberty was taken by the Gnostics. Cerinthus, says Philaster, enjoined the observance of the Mosaic law, rejected Paul, and admitted the gospel of Matthew only, agreeing with Carpocrates with respect to the nativity of Christ\*.

Making any *alteration* in the books of scripture was called *corrupting* them; and this, no doubt, was done by the Gnostics, but they could not thereby intend to impose their alterations upon the world, as the

\* Carpocras—Christum de femine Joseph natum arbitratur. Cerinthus successit huic errori, docens de generatione itidem salvatoris, docet circumcidi et sabbatizari—apostolum Paulum non accipit—Evangelium secundum Matthæum solum accipit, &c. Bib. Pat. vol. 5. p. 15.

genuine writings of the apostles; for that they must have known to be impossible. It is, therefore, rather to be supposed, that they retained only such parts of them as they thought the most useful; and in this they would naturally be biased by their peculiar principles.

This charge of *corrupting the scriptures* does not affect all the Gnostics. “I know “of none,” says Origen, “who corrupt “the gospel, except the disciples of Mar- “cion and Valentinus, and those of Lu- “cian\*.” “The Marcionites,” says Chry- sostom, “use only one gospel, which they “abridge, and mix as they please †.” What were all the particulars of Marci- on’s alterations of the gospel, we are not informed, but he began the gospel of Luke with the third chapter, thus, “In the 15th year of Tiberius Cæsar ‡;” and this was

\* Μέλαχαραξάντας δὲ το εὐαγγελιον ἀλλως ἐκ οἶδα ἢ τες ἀπο Μαρ- μωνος, καὶ τες ἀπο Οὐαλεντίνου, οἱμοὶ δὲ καὶ τες ἀπο Λικκιανῶν. Ad, Celf. lib.2. p. 77.

† Οὐδὲ γὰρ παραδεχόμενοι τες εὐαγγελίας ἀπαιτίας. ἀλλ’ ἐνα μόνου, καὶ αὐτὸν περικοψάντες καὶ συγχραντες ὡς ἐβελονίω. In Gal. i. Opera, vol. 10. p. 971.

‡ Ταῦτα πάντα περικοψίας ἀπεπλήθησε καὶ ἀρχὴν τῆ εὐαγγελίας εἶλετο ταύτην.—Ἐν τῷ πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ εἰσι Τίβεριος Καῖσαρ. Epiphanius, Hær. 42. Opera, vol. 1. p. 312.

owing to his not giving credit to the history of the miraculous conception, contained in the two first chapters.

We could not, however, have concluded from this omission, that Marcion thought them not to have been written by Luke, if he had not expressly maintained this, as we are informed by Tertullian, who, speaking of the two copies of Luke's gospel, his own, and Marcion's, says, "I say that mine is the true copy, Marcion that his is so. I affirm that Marcion's copy is adulterated; he, that mine is so\*." He adds, that his own copy was the more ancient, because Marcion himself did for some time receive it. But this he might do till, on examination, he thought he saw sufficient reason to reject it. Cerinthus, Carpocrates, and other early Gnostics, rejected the history of the miraculous conception, as well as Marcion and the Ebionites,

\* Ego meum dico verum, Marcion suum. Ego Marcionis affirmo adulteratum, Marcion meum. Adv. Marcionem, lib. 4. cap. 4. p. 415. Quod vero pertinet ad evangelium interim Lucæ — adeo antiquius Marcione est ut et ipse illi Marcion aliquando crediderit. Ibid.

C H A P.

CHAPTER IV.

*The Gnostics were the only Heretics in early times.*

IT appears from the evidence of all antiquity, that the Gnostics were always considered by other christians as *heretics*; and though there were of them in the church of Corinth, and also in that of Ephesus, and other churches at first, they either soon separated themselves from the communion of other christians, or were expelled from it; so that when the apostle John wrote they were a distinct body of men, distinguished by peculiar names. It is easy to shew, from ecclesiastical history, not only that the Gnostics were considered as *heretics*, but that they were the *only* persons who were considered in that light for two or three centuries after Christ. But before I enter on the proof of this, it may not be amiss to make a few observations relating to *heresy*, and the ideas of the ancients concerning it.

S E C-

## SECTION I.

*Of Heresy in general.*

**H**ERESY properly signifies a *division*, or *separation*, and therefore was used to express a part detached from a large body of men. In this case, the larger body, or *majority*, would, of course, entertain an unfavourable opinion of them; but the *minority*, without denying that they were *heretics*, or the *minority*, would not think themselves subject to any just opprobrium on that account. Thus, while the christians were the minority among the Jews, and were consequently considered as *heretics*, Paul says, Acts xxiv. 14. *According to the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.* As heretics, we also find that the christians were cast out of the Jewish synagogues (which was a pattern for the christian excommunications) and yet it appears that, for some time,

time, christians were admitted into the synagogues, and allowed to preach, and dispute in them.

Thus we find it to have been the custom of Paul, in all his apostolical journeys, to begin with teaching in the Jewish synagogues, and that he continued so to do, till, on account of their coming to no agreement, he was either denied that liberty, or withdrew of his own accord. This was the case at Ephesus, where he first preached three months in the Jewish synagogue, but then left it, Acts xix. 8. *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples disputing (or discoursing) daily in the school of one Tyrannus.*

In like manner, when the Gnostics began to distinguish themselves, and to be troublesome in christian churches, in which they



they had been tolerated for a time, they either separated of themselves, or were expelled. Paul tolerated them for some time at Corinth, and only gave orders for the excommunication of the incestuous person, who is generally supposed to have been at the head of that party in the place; and at Ephesus, he contented himself with excommunicating Hymeneus and Alexander. 1 Tim. i. 20. As Hymeneus denied the resurrection, as appears from 2 Tim. ii. 18. it is probable that Alexander did so too, and therefore, that they were both excommunicated as Gnostics.

Paul's directions to Titus were general, and decisive, requiring him to reject heretics after the first or second admonition only; having perhaps, from a more perfect knowledge of their character, and a longer acquaintance with their conduct, found that there was but little prospect of convincing them, and therefore thought that the sooner they were entirely separated from the society of christians the better. That they were Gnostics, and Gnostics only, concerning whom he  
gave

gave these directions, is clear from the context, which I shall therefore recite, Titus iii. 9. *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.* He here probably alludes to the profligacy of some of the Gnostics, which he imagined they could not but themselves think to be blameable. As to mere *opinions*, no person can actually hold any one, and at the same time think it to be wrong, so as to *condemn himself* for holding it; and indeed those practices which men really think to be justified by their opinions, they must themselves consider as innocent, whatever others may think of them.

With respect to *doctrines*, this is a piece of justice that Evagrius very candidly does to the heretics, after the separation had continued a long time. “No heretics,” he says, “meant to blaspheme, but all thought

“ their opinion to be preferable to that of  
“ those who went before them \*.”

In the time of the apostle John, the Gnostics seem to have been entirely separated from the church; and it should seem that they had generally retired of their own accord, as may be collected from 1 John ii. 19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.* That these persons were Gnostics, is evident from the context. For in the verse preceding, he had spoken of there being *many antichrists*, and in verse 22, he had defined antichrist to be *one who denied that Jesus is the Christ*, which is well known to be a Gnostic doctrine.

It appears, however, from the book of Revelation, that there were excep-

\* Και υδεις αδυνατων των αιρεσεων παρα χριστιανους εξευρηκων πρω-  
τολυτως βλασφημιεν ηθηλησεν, η αιμασαι το θειον βελομενος εξελισθησεν.  
αλλα πολλων υποκαμβανων κρεισσον τε φθασαντος λεγειν ει τοδε πρεσ-  
βευσει. Hist. lib. I. cap. II. p. 263.

tions in this case, and that Gnostics were not absolutely excluded from all churches. There were Nicolaitans in the church of Pergamos, as well as others who did not come under that particular denomination; for the Gnostics were very early divided into a variety of sects and parties. Such persons also there were in the church of Thyatira, Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. As christians had no *creeds* in those days, any person openly professing christianity, might be a member of a christian church; and if he did not make himself troublesome by propagating offensive opinions, would certainly be allowed to continue in it. For this has been the case in all ages. Afterwards the creed to which every person gave his assent at baptism, was so framed as purposely to exclude the Gnostics, and then the separation was complete, as will be shewn in its proper place.

In later times, when there was a still greater diversity of opinion among christians, the definition of a heretic came to be much more difficult, as is acknowledged by Austin. "Every *error*," he says, "is not

“ *heresy*, though all heresy, which consists  
 “ in vice, must be an error. What it is,  
 “ therefore, that makes a heretic, cannot,  
 “ I think, be strictly defined, or at least not  
 “ without difficulty\*.”

At length the rule in which christians acquiesced with the most satisfaction, was to define that to be orthodox which was received in those great churches which had been founded by the apostles, such as those of Rome, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Irenæus strongly urges this topic, saying, that the Valentinians were not before Valentinus, nor the Marcionites before Marcion, &c.† This is the *short method* taken by Tertullian, in his treatise *De Præscriptione*, the great

\* Non enim omnis error hæresis est, quamvis, omnis hæresis quæ in vitio ponitur, nisi errore aliquo hæresis esse non possit. Quid ergo faciat hæreticum, regulari quadam definitione comprehendi sicut ego existimo, aut omnino non potest, aut difficillime potest. Index Hæresium, Pref. Opera, vol. 6. p. 11.

† Ante Valentinum enim non fuerunt, qui sunt a Valentino; neque ante Marcionem erant, qui sunt a Marcione; neque omnino erant reliqui sensus maligni, quos sepra enumeravimus, antequam initiatores et inventores, perversitatis eorum fierent. Lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 206.

principle

principle of which is thus briefly expressed by himself, “ That is the true faith, which “ is the most ancient, and that a corruption “ which is modern\*.” But then to determine what was ancient, and what was modern, he appeals to the tenets of those churches, or rather the bishops and clergy of those churches, at that time, without considering what changes had, in a course of time, been gradually and insensibly introduced into them †. In this manner, however, *heresy*, and *novelty* came to be considered as synonymous. Thus the term *καινοτομία* seems to be used by Athanasius ‡. Without attending to this cir-

\* Id esse verum quodcumque primum ; id esse adulterum, quodcumque posterius. Ad Prax. sect. 1. p. 501.

† Quid autem prædicaverint, id est, quid illis Christus revelaverit, et hic præscribam non aliter probari debere, nisi per easdem ecclesias, quas ipsi Apostoli condiderunt, ipsi eis prædicando, tam viva, quod aiunt voce, quam per epistolas postea. Si hæc ita sunt, constat proinde omnem doctrinam, quæ cum illis ecclesiis Apostolicis, matricibus et originalibus fidei conspiret, veritati deputandam ; sine dubio tenentem quod Ecclesiæ ab Apostolis, Apostoli a Christo, Christus a Deo accepit. De Præscriptione sect. 21. p. 209.

‡ Δι' ὧν ἐκβάλλεται μὲν εἰκότως ἢ τῆς Σαμοσαίτης καινοτομίας. Can. Sabel. Opera, vol. 1. p. 654.

cumstance, we shall often be misled in reading ecclesiastical history. For it is not unusual with historians to speak of an opinion as *new*, when they themselves have said that was adopted from some other person. Of this I shall, in its place, give several instances.

In later times *heresy* came to be distinguished from *schism* by the former signifying a wrong opinion, and the latter an actual separation from the communion of the catholic church, though on any other account. Thus Jerom defines the words\*.

As the great body of Gnostics had no communion with the catholic church, this very want of communion, on the principle above-mentioned, was alledged as a decisive argument against them. “Heretics,” says Tertullian, “have nothing to do with our discipline. The very want of communion with us shews they that are foreign

\* Inter hæresim et schisma hoc interesse arbitramur, quod hæresis perversum dogma habeat: schisma propter episcopalem dissentionem ab ecclesia pariter separet. Opera, vol. 6. p. 209.

“to us\*.” “When heresies and schisms rose afterwards,” says Cyprian, “they set up separate conventicles to themselves, and left the head and origin of truth †.” And again, “If heretics are christians, why are they not in the church of God ‡?” Heretics are also spoken of as out of the church by Eusebius §. “Dionysius,” says Athanasius, “was no heretic, because he did not separate himself from the church ||.” “It seemed proper,” says Basil, “from the beginning, to reject heretics entirely ¶.” “Every heretic,” says

\* Hæretici autem nullum habent confortium nostræ disciplinæ, quos extraneos utique testatur ipsa ademptio communicationis. De Baptismo, sect. 15. p. 230.

† Et cum hæreses et schismata post modum nata sunt dum conventicula sibi diversa constituunt, veritatis caput atque originem reliquerunt. Opera, p. 112.

‡ Hæretici Christiani sunt, an non? si Christiani sunt: cur in ecclesia Dei non sunt. P. 234.

§ Ταῦτα τὰ δογματὰ εἶδε οἱ ἐξω τῆς ἐκκλησίας αἰρετικοὶ ἐισοδησαν ἀποφθισάσαι πῶλε. Hist. lib. 5 cap. 20. p. 238.

|| Μὴδὲ αὐτῶς αἰρεσίν ἐκδικῶν ἐξῆλθε τῆς ἐκκλησίας, De Sententia Dionysii, Opera, vol. 1. p. 550.

¶ Αἰρεσεὺς μὲν τὰς παντελῶς ἀπερρηγμένους, καὶ καὶ αὐτὴν τὴν πίστιν ἀπηλλοτριωμένους. εδοξε τοιγὴν τοῖς ἐξ ἀρχῆς το μὲν τῶν αἰρετικῶν παντελῶς ἀδείψαι. Ad Amphiloeh. Ep. Opera, vol. 3. p. 20.



Jerom, “ is born in the church, but is cast  
 “ out of the church, and fights against the  
 “ church \*.” Austin also says, “ As soon  
 “ as any heresy existed, it separated itself  
 “ from the catholic church †.”

This being the case, according to the uniform testimony of all antiquity, in every period of it, it may be safely concluded, that though numbers of quiet people might continue in communion with the church, yet that the majority must have been such as were not deemed *heretics*; especially as all persons had equal liberty to retire, and set up separate places of worship, and the temptation to continue in the church was not great. Since, therefore, there were no separate places of worship for christians of any denomination, besides either those who were termed *catholics*, or those who were called *Gnostics*, under some name or other, it may be safely concluded, that in these

\* Omnis enim hæreticus nascitur in ecclesia, sed de ecclesia projicitur, et contendit et pugnat contra parentem. In Jerom. 22. vol. 4. p. 277.

† Statim enim unaquæque hæresis ut existerat, et a congregatione Catholicæ communionis exibat, &c. De Baptismo contra Donatistas, lib. 5. cap. 19. vol. 7. p. 446.  
 early

early times none could be deemed heretics besides the Gnostics.

When bodies of men distinguish themselves so much as to form separate places of assembly, they will of course be much talked of, and thence will arise a necessity of giving them some *name*, by which they may be distinguished from other classes of men. The purpose of discourse and writing will make this unavoidable; because it is inconvenient frequently to use periphrases, and long descriptions of persons or things. Accordingly, the disciples of Christ had not long been known as a separate body of men, before they were distinguished by the name of *Nazarenes*, from Nazareth, of which place Jesus was, and then by that of *christians*.

As the Gentile christians used a different language from the Jewish, and of course held separate assemblies, and on other accounts had little communication with them, the latter came soon to be distinguished by a peculiar name, viz. that of *Ebionites*, which was probably given them  
by

by their unbelieving Jewish brethren, or that of *Nazarenes*, which, not being any longer used in Greek, as synonymous to *christians*, but retained by the Jews, was not wanting to distinguish the Gentile christians.

For similar reasons, the Gnostics were soon distinguished by a variety of peculiar names, as Nicolaitans, Cerinthians, &c. inasmuch, that other christians having no other name, this circumstance alone came to be considered as a proof that all those who were known by these peculiar names were not christians. It may, therefore, be taken for granted, that all bodies of men who had no peculiar names by which they were distinguished, were, in those early times, considered as orthodox christians; and this was the case with all the *unitarians* among the Gentiles, at the same time that they are allowed to have been even the majority of the unlearned among them. But of this hereafter.

A person disputing with a Marcionite says, " How can you be a christian, who  
" bear

“ bear not the name ; for you are not  
 “ called a christian, but a Marcionite \*?”  
 Athanasius also argues, that “ Arians are not  
 “ christians, because they bear *his* name,  
 “ and not that of Christ †.” Chrysoftom,  
 teaching how to distinguish the catholics  
 from others, says, that “ Heretics have some  
 “ persons by whom they are called. Ac-  
 “ cording to the name of the heresiarch, so  
 “ is the sect. But no man has given us a  
 “ name, but the faith itself †.” Again, he  
 says, “ Were we ever separated from the  
 “ church ? Have we heresiarchs ? Have  
 “ we any name from men ; as Marcion gave  
 “ his name to some, Manes his to others,

\* Πως ει χριστιανος, ος κδε ονομα χριστιανος καταξιωσαι φερειν · κ  
 ηναρ χριστιανος ονομαζει αλλα μαρκιωνιτης. Origen Contra Mar-  
 cionites, p. 12.

† Χριστιανοι εσμεν κη καλεμεθα. Οι δε γε τοις αιρετικοις απολαθεν-  
 τες, παν μυριες διαδοχης εχωσιν, αλλα παντως το ονομα τε την αιρεσιν  
 εφευραντος φερουσιν, αμελει τελευτησαντος Αρειου. Contra Arianos,  
 Or. 1. Opera, vol. 1. p. 309.

† Εκεινοι εχουσι τινας αφ ων καλεσθαι, αυτις τε αιρεσιαρχει, δηλονδι  
 το ονομα, κη εκαστη αιρεσει ομοιος. τωαρ ημιν αυτη μεν κδεις εδωκεν ημιν  
 ονομα, η δε πωις αυτη. In Acta Apost. cap. 15: Hom. 33.  
 vol. 8. p. 680.

“ and

“ and Arius his to a third part\*.” Tertullian says, “ If they be heretics, they can not be christians †.”

I shall now proceed to prove, by a great mass of evidence, that the Gnostics were in fact considered as the only heretics in early times ; and it is particularly remarkable, that the term *heretic* and *Gnostic* had been so long used as synonymous, that there are many instances of their being used as such, long after the Arians, unitarians, and others had been decreed to be heretics, which is a plain proof of the long established use of that term. In the instances that I shall produce, it will be exceedingly evident, that when the writers which I quote speak of *heresy in general*, the circumstances of the discourse are such, as admit of no other application of the term than to the Gnostics only. As this is an article of some importance, I shall produce a number of instances

\* Μη γὰρ ἀπεσχισμεθα τῆς ἐκκλησίας· μὴ γὰρ ἀρεσιαρχαὶ ἐχομεν· μὴ γὰρ ἀπὸ ἀνδρῶπων καλυμεθα· μὴ γὰρ προσηγμεν ἡμῶν τις εἶναι, ὡσπερ τῷ μὲν Μαρκίῳ, τῷ δὲ Μανιχαίῳ, τῷ δὲ Ἀρείῳ, τῷ δὲ ἄλλοις τις ἀρεσεως ἀρχηγῶ. Ibid. p. 681.

† Si enim hæretici sunt christiani esse non possunt. De Præscriptione, sect. 37. p. 215.

from

from writers of every period ; and I can assure my readers, that I could have added greatly to the number of such quotations, if I had thought it necessary.

I shall take the writers in the order of time ; but in addition to what I have already said concerning the apostles, and the notice that they have taken of the Gnostics, and especially concerning John, and the introduction to his gospel, I shall previously observe, that the oldest opinion on this subject, viz. that of Irenæus, is in favour of my supposition, that even, in the introduction to his gospel, he had a view to the Gnostics only ; and by no means, as it was afterwards imagined, and to serve a particular hypothesis, perpetually insisted upon by the later Fathers, the unitarians.

Irenæus speaking of the Cerinthians and Nicolaitans says, that “ John meant to refute them, and shew that there is only one omnipotent God, who made all things by his word, visible and invisible, in the introduction to his gospel\*.” “ No

\* Omnia igitur talia circumscribere volens discipulus Domini, et regulam veritatis constituere in Ecclesia quia est

“heretics,” he says, “hold that the word  
 “was made flesh \*.” Again, he says,  
 “John alludes to the Gnostics both in his  
 “gospel, and in his epistle, and describes  
 “them by the name of Antichrist, and  
 “those who were not in communion with  
 “christians †.” The whole of these pas-

est unus Deus omnipotens, qui per verbum suum omnia fecit, et visibilia, et invisibilia; significans quoque, quoniam per verbum, per quod Deus perfecit conditionem, in hoc et salutem his qui in conditione sunt, præstitit hominibus, sic inchoavit in ea quæ est secundum evangelium doctrina. In principio erat verbum. Lib. 3. cap. XI. p. 218.

\* Secundum autem nullam sententiam hæreticorum, verbum Dei caro factum est. Ibid. p. 219.

† Non ergo alterum filium hominis novit evangelium, nisi hunc qui ex Maria, qui et passus est: sed neque Christum avolantem ante passionem ab Jesu; sed hunc qui natus est, Jesum Christum novit Dei filium, et eundem hunc passum resurrexisse, quem admodum Johannes Domini discipulus confirmat, dicens: Hæc autem scripta sunt, ut credatis quoniam Jesus est Christus filius Dei, et ut credentes, vitam æternam habeatis in nomine ejus; providens has blasphemias regulas, quæ dividunt Dominum, quantum ex ipsis attinet, ex altera et altera substantia dicentes eum factum. Propter quod et in epistola sua sic testificatus est nobis: Filioli, novissima hora est, et quemadmodum audistis quoniam Antichristus venit, nunc Antichristi multi facti sunt; unde cognoscimus quoniam

pages are well worth the reader's consideration.

He had the same idea with respect to the introduction to the gospel of Matthew.

novissima hora est. Ex nobis exierunt, sed non erant ex nobis; si enim fuissent ex nobis permansissent utique nobiscum: sed ut manifestarentur quoniam non sunt ex nobis. Cognoscite ergo quoniam omne mendacium extraneum est, et non est de veritate. Quis est mendax, nisi qui negat quoniam Jesus non est Christus; hic est Antichristus.—Sententia enim eorum homicidalis, Deos quidem plures confingens, et patres multos simulans, comminuens autem et per multa dividens filium Dei: quos et Dominus nobis cavere prædixit, et discipulus ejus Johannes in prædicta epistola fugere eos præcepit, dicens: Multi seductores exierunt in hunc mundum, qui non confitentur Jesum Christum in carne venisse. Hic est seductor et Antichristus. Videte eos, ne perdatis quod operati estis. Et rursus in epistola ait: Multi pseudoprophetæ exierunt de seculo. In hoc cognoscite Spiritum Dei. Omnis spiritus qui confitur Jesum Christum in carne venisse ex Deo est. Et omnis spiritus qui solvit Jesum Christum, non est ex Deo, sed ex Antichristo est. Hæc autem similia sunt illi quod in evangelio dictum est, quoniam verbum caro factum est. Et habitavit in nobis. Propter quod rursus in epistola clamat. Omnis qui credit quia Jesus est Christus, ex Deo natus est; unum et eundem sciens Jesum Christum cui apertæ sunt portæ cœli propter carnalem ejus assumptionem: qui etiam in eadem carne in quæ passus est, veniet, gloriam revelans Patris. Lib. 3. cap. 18. p. 241, 242.

For,



For, speaking of those who said that Jesus who was born of Mary was not the Christ, he says, “ The Holy Spirit foreseeing their  
“ perverseness, and guarding against their  
“ artifice, said by Matthew, the generation  
“ of Christ was in this wife\*.”

With respect to the apostle John, Clemens Alexandrinus had the same idea, when he said, that “ They are the antichrist, in-  
“ tended by John in his epistle, who reject  
“ marriage, and the procreation of children,  
“ being guilty of impiety towards the om-  
“ nipotent creator, the one God, that they  
“ may not be the authors of misery, and  
“ supply food for death †.” Ecumenius also says, that by antichrist John meant Cerinthus, and those who were like him ‡.

\* Sed prævidens spiritus sanctus depravatores, et præmuniens contra fraudulentiam eorum, per Matthæum ait : Christi autem generatio sic erat. Lib. 5. cap. 18. p. 239.

† Τοις δὲ εὐφημῶς δι' ἐγκρατείας ἀσεβῶσιν, εἰς τὴν κλίσιν καὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος δημιουργοῦν τὸν παντοκράτορα μόνον θεόν, καὶ διδάσκουσι μὴ δεῖν παραδεχέσθαι γάμον, καὶ παιδοποιεῖν μηδὲ ἀνείσαγειν τῷ κόσμῳ δυσυχιστοσύνας εἰρέως, μηδὲ ἐπιχορηγεῖν τῷ θανάτῳ τροφήν. ἐκεῖνα λεκτικῶν : πρώτων μὲν, τοῦ τῆς Ἀποστολῆς Ἰωάννου, καὶ νῦν Ἀντιχριστοὶ πολλοὶ γεγενησάντων. Strom. lib. 3. p. 145.

‡ Ταῦτο δὲ Σίμων ὁ ἀνοσιος ἐληρεῖ, ἀλλὰ οὐκ εἶναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἄλλον τὸν χριστὸν. τὸν μὲν Ἰησοῦν, τὸν ἀπὸ τῆς ἁγίας Μαρίας, τὸν δὲ χριστὸν, τὸν

ἐπεὶ

He also says that, “ Peter by those who follow the flesh, meant the accursed Nicolaitans, as the Gnostics, or Naafenes, or Cerdonians, for the mischief goes by many names †.”

This, I doubt not, was the truth of the case; and if this apostle expressed so much indignation against the Gnostics, and the Gnostics only (for no hint is given of there being more than *one heresy* that gave him any disturbance) it is plain that the unitarians, who were always considered as directly opposite to the Gnostics, gave him none. And yet not only the nature of the thing shows, that there must have been unitarians in the church at that time, but it was expressly allowed by all the Fathers, that the church was full of them, most of them disbelieving even the miraculous conception. But this will be discussed more largely hereafter.

Επει τα Ιορδανη καταβαλτα απ' υρανε, ο τω ψευδει εν περιτρολισμενος φησι τωλω ελωσ Ανιχριστος εστι. In 1 John 3. Opera, vol. 2. P. 573.

\* Λεγει δε περι των καταρατων Νικολαιων, ηλοι Γνωστικων, η Νααστηνων, η Κερδωνιανων. πολωνυμιος γαρ αυτων η κακια. In 2 Pe. Opera vol: 2. 542.

## SECTION II.

*Of Heresy before Justin Martyr.*

**I**GNATIUS frequently mentions *heresy* and *heretics*, and, like John, with great indignation ; but it is evident to every person who is at all acquainted with the history, learning, and language of those times, and of the subsequent ones, that he had no persons in his eye but the Gnostics only. I desire no other evidence of this, than a careful inspection of the passages. I shall recite only one of them, from the epistle to the Smyrnæans, sect. 4, 5. in Wake's translation, p. 116. Speaking of his own sufferings, he says, " he who was made a perfect  
 " man strengthening me. Whom some,  
 " not knowing, do deny, or rather have been  
 " denied by him, being the advocates of  
 " death, rather than of the truth ; whom  
 " neither the prophets, nor the law of  
 " Moses have persuaded, nor the gospel  
 " itself, even to this day, nor the sufferings  
 " of

“ of every one of us. For they think  
 “ also the same things of us. For what  
 “ does a man profit me, if he shall praise  
 “ me, and shall blaspheme my Lord, not  
 “ confessing that he was truly made a man.  
 “ Now he that doth not say this, does in  
 “ effect deny him, and is in death. But  
 “ for the names of such as do this, they  
 “ being unbelievers, I thought it not fitting  
 “ to write them unto you. Yea, God for-  
 “ bid that I should make any mention of  
 “ them, till they shall repent, to a true  
 “ belief of Christ’s passion, which is our  
 “ resurrection. Let no man deceive him-  
 “ self, &c.\*” He afterwards speaks of  
 these persons abstaining from the eu-  
 charist, and the public offices, “ because  
 “ they confessed not the eucharist to be the

\* Πάντα υπομεινω αυτου με ενδυναμηνιος του τελειω ανθρωπιω  
 γενομενω. Ον τινες αγνοητες αρνηται, μαλλον δε ηρηθησαν υπ’ αυτω, οτις  
 συτηγοροι τε θανατω μαλλον η της αληθειας. ως εκ επεισαν αι προφηησαι,  
 εδε ο νομος μωυσεως. αλλα εδε μεχρι νυν το ευαγγελιον, εδε τα ημετερα  
 τον κατω ανδρα παθηματα. κη γαρ περι ημων το αυτω φρονεσιν. τι γαρ  
 με ωφελει τις, ει εμε επαινει τον δε κυριον μεσ βλασφημει, μη ομολογων  
 αυτον σαρκοφορον· ο δε τωλο μη λεγων, τελειωσ αυτω απηρηται, ων νεκρο-  
 φορος. τα δε ονοματα αυτων, οτω απιστα εκ εδοξε μοι εγραψαι. αλλα  
 μηδε γενοιτο μοι αυτων μνημενευσιν, μεχρις τε μελανοησωσιν εις το παθος,  
 ο εστιν ημων αναστασις. Μηδεις πλανασθω. p. 36.

“flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which  
 “suffered for our sins, and which the Fa-  
 “ther of his goodness raised again from  
 “the dead. It will, therefore,” he adds,  
 “become you to abstain from such persons,  
 “and not to speak with them, neither in  
 “private nor in public\*.”

How like is this to the language of the apostle John, and how well they explain each other. Here we see the *blasphemy* ascribed to the Gnostics, which Justin mentions, their separating themselves from the communion of christians, their denying the resurrection, and their pride. Now, how came this writer, like John, never to censure the unitarians, if he had thought them to be heretics? Their conduct can only be accounted for on the supposition, that both himself and the apostle John, were unitarians, and that they had no idea of any *heresies* besides those of the different kinds of Gnostics.

\* Ευχαριστίας ἡ προσευχῆς ἀπεχονίαι, δια το μη ομολογεῖν τὴν ευχαριστίαν σαρκα εἶναι τῆ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, τὴν ὑπερ ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθῆσαν, ἢ τὴ χρησθήησι οὐ σωτῆρ ἡγείρεν. Πρεπον ἐν ἐστὶν ἀπεχεσθαι τῶν τοιούτων, ἡ μὴτε καὶ ἰδιῶν περὶ αὐτῶν λαλεῖν, μὴτε κοινῆ.  
 Ibid. p. 37.

Pearson says, that Ignatius refers to the doctrine of the Ebionites in his epistle to Polycarp, and in those to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, and the Philadelphians. But I find no such references in them, except perhaps in two passages which may easily be supposed to have been altered; because, when corrected by an unitarian, nothing is wanting to the evident purpose of the writer; whereas his censures of the Gnostics are frequent and copious; so that no person can pretend to leave them out, without materially injuring the epistles. Indeed, the evidence that I shall produce of writers subsequent to Ignatius not considering unitarians as heretics, affords a strong presumption that he did not consider them in that light, and therefore that any passages in his epistles which express the contrary must be spurious.

Besides, there are in these epistles of Ignatius, several things that are unfavourable to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Thus, to the Ephesians, he says, “How  
“ much more must I think you happy who  
“ are so joined to him (the bishop) as the  
S 3 “ church

“ church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ  
 “ to the Father, that so all things may agree  
 “ in the same unity\*.” To the Magnesians,  
 he says, “ As therefore the Lord did no-  
 “ thing without the Father, being united  
 “ to him, neither by himself, nor yet by  
 “ his apostles; so neither do ye any thing  
 “ without your bishop and presbyters †.”

What this excellent man said when he  
 appeared before the Emperor Trajan, was  
 the language of an unitarian. “ You err,”  
 he said, “ in that you call the evil spirits  
 “ of the heathens gods. For there is but  
 “ one God, who made heaven and earth,  
 “ and the sea, and all that are in them; and  
 “ one Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son,  
 “ whose friendship may I enjoy ‡.”

\* Πρωτω μαλλον υμας μακαριζω της ευμεπραμενης εβας, ως η εκκλησια  
 Ιησους χριστω, κη ο Ιησους χριστος τω πατρι, ινα πασιν εν ενδημη συμφωνια η.  
 Sect. 5. p. 13.

† Ωσπερ εν ο Κυριος ανευ της πατρος υδεν εποησε, ηνωμενος εν εβη δι  
 αυτη, εβη δια των αποστολων· εβας μηδε υμεις ανευ της επισκοπου, κη των  
 πρεσβυτερων, μηδεν πρασσειε. Sect. 7. ibid.

‡ Unus enim Deus, qui fecit cælum, et terram,  
 mare, et omnia quæ sunt in ipsis; et unus Jesus Christus,  
 filius ejus unigenitus, cujus amicitia fruar. Cotelerii  
 Patres, vol. 1. p. 173.

In





“ that raised up Christ from the dead shall  
 “ also raise us up in like manner \*.”

The account that Irenæus gives of Polycarp contains little more than a declaration of the antipathy that he bore to the Gnostics, and his having taught a doctrine contrary to theirs. Among other things he says. “ that when he met Marcion, who  
 “ asked him whether he would own him,  
 “ he replied, I own you to be the first-born  
 “ of Satan † ;” and that if he had heard of the heresy of which he was treating, which was that of Valentinus, he would have said, according to his custom ‡, “ Good God, to

\* Απολιποῦντες τὴν κενὴν μαλακολογίαν, καὶ τὴν τῶν πολλῶν πλάνην, πνευματικῶς εἰς τὸν εὐγερανία τὸν κυρίον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν — ὁ δὲ εὐγερίας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐγερει. Sect. 2. p. 185.

† Καὶ αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Πολυκαρπὸς Μαρκιῶνι πότε εἰς οὕτω αὐτῷ ἐλθοῦντι, καὶ φησαυτὶ ἐπιγινώσκεις ἡμᾶς ; ἀπεκρίθη ἐπιγινώσκων τῶν παρὰ τοῦτον τὴν σάβαναν. Lib. 3. cap. 3. p. 204.

‡ Καὶ δύναμαι διαμαρτυρησάσθαι ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅτι εἰ τι τοιῶν ἀκηκοει ἐκεῖνος ὁ μακάριος καὶ ἀποστολικὸς πρεσβύτερος. ἀνακραξάς, αὐ, καὶ ἐμφράξας τὰ ὦτα αὐτοῦ, καὶ κἀγαθὰ τοῦ συνθεῖς εἰπὼν ὦ καλὲ Θεε, εἰς οὐκας με κείρεις τέλειρκαας, ἵνα τέλειρ ἀνεχωμαι ὡς πεφευγοὶ αὐ καὶ τὸν ποτόν ἐν ὧ καθεζόμενος ἢ ἐγὼς τῶν τοιῶν ἀκηκοει λόγων. Eusebii Hist. lib. 5. cap. 20. p. 239.

“ what

“ what times hast thou reserved me, that I  
 “ should hear such things.”

The manner in which Polycarp in-  
 scribes his epistle is that of an unitarian \* ;  
 “ Mercy unto you and peace, from God  
 “ Almighty, and the Lord Jesus Christ  
 “ our Saviour, be multiplied.”

I shall consider the evidence for Hege-  
 sippus being an unitarian more particularly  
 hereafter. But, in this place, to take all  
 the writers in the order of time, or nearly  
 so, I shall produce two extracts from his  
 works, preserved by Eusebius, in which a  
 variety of denominations of Gnostics are  
 mentioned as heretics, and such circum-  
 stances are added, as, exclusive of the con-  
 sideration of his omitting the mention of  
 the Ebionites, Nazarenes, or unitarians of  
 any kind, clearly shews that his idea was  
 fixed to the Gnostics only.

“ Hegesippus,” Eusebius says, “ wrote the  
 “ history of the preaching of the apostles in  
 “ five books. Conversing with many bishops  
 “ in his journey to Rome, he found the same  
 “ doctrine with them all.—The church

\* Ελεος υμιν, κ' ειρηνη, παρα θεου παντοκρατορος, κ' κυριου Ιησου χριστου  
 τε σωτηριου ημων, πανδηθεν. p. 184.

“ of Corinth continued in the right faith  
 “ till their bishop Primus.—Hitherto,” i. e.  
 till the time of Simon, bishop of Jerufalem,  
 “ the church remained a virgin, for it was  
 “ not corrupted with absurd doctrines.  
 “ But first Thebuthis, because he was not  
 “ a bishop, began to corrupt it, being one  
 “ of the seven heresies, himself being of the  
 “ laity, of whom were the Simonians from  
 “ Simon, Cleobians from Cleobius, Dosi-  
 “ theans from Dositheus, Gorthæans from  
 “ Gorthæus, and the Masbotheans. From  
 “ them came the Menandrians, the Marcio-  
 “ nites, the Carpocratians, the Valentini-  
 “ ans, the Basilideans, and the Saturnilians;  
 “ each of them preaching their different  
 “ doctrines. From them came false christs,  
 “ and false prophets, who divided the unity  
 “ of the church with corrupt doctrines  
 “ against God, and against his Christ \*.”

\* Ο μὲν ἐν Ἡγιοσιτικῷ, ἐν πέντε τοῖς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλθόντων ὑπομνη-  
 μασι, τῆς ἰδίας γνώμης πλεονεκτήνη μνημῆν καὶ ἀλελοῖπεν. Ἐν οἷς ὄντοι,  
 ὡς πλείστοις ἐπισκοποῖς συμμεῖεν, ἀποδημῶν σείταμενος μέχρι Ρωμῆς·  
 καὶ ὡς εἰ τὴν αὐτὴν παρὰ πᾶσιν παρείληφε διδασκαλίαν.

Καὶ ἐπεμμεν ἡ ἐκκλησία ἡ Κορινθίων ἐν τῷ ὀρθῷ λόγῳ, μέχρι  
 Πριμῆ ἐπισκοπευούσης ἐν Κορινθίῳ.— Διὰ τὸ ἐκαστὸν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν  
 παρθενῶν· ἔπειτα γὰρ ἐφθάρθη ἀνοσις μάλασις. ἀρχεῖται δὲ ὁ Θεβούθις  
 διὰ τὸ μὴ γενεσθαι αὐτὸν ἐπισκοποῦ, ὑποφθεῖρειν, ἀπο τῶν ἐπὶ αἰρεσεων,

What could this writer mean by those who *divided the unity of the church* (which, in his time, the Gnostics only did, and the unitarians certainly did not) by the *false Christs*, and especially the *doctrine against God*, but the tenets of the Gnostics only. *Corrupt doctrine against Christ* is a more ambiguous expression; but the false notions of the Gnostics concerning Christ were as conspicuous as any of their doctrines, and are most particularly noticed by John.

The other extract from this writer is no less to my purpose. “Till this time,” viz. the time of Trajan, “Hegesippus says, that the church continued a virgin uncorrupted; those who corrupted its doctrines, if they then existed, concealing themselves. But when the holy choir of the apostles was dead, and all that gene-

ων, κ' αυτος ην εν τω λαω. αφ' ων Σιμων, οθεν οι Σιμωνιανοι · κ' Κλεοβιος, οθεν Κλεοβιανοι · κ' Δοσιθεος, οθεν Δοσιθιανοι · κ' Γορθαιος, οθεν Γορθωνιοι, κ' Μασσαβαιοι. οθεν απο τριων Μενανδριανισται, κ' Μαρμιωνισται, κ' Καρποκρατιανοι · κ' Ουαλεντινιανοι, κ' Βασιλειδιανοι. κ' Σαλορνιλιανοι · εκαστος ιδιως κ' ειερως ιδιαν δοξαν παρεισηγαγεν. απο τριων ψευδοχριστοι · ψευδοπροφηται · ψευδαποστολοι · οι τινες εμερισαν την ενωσιν της εκκλησιας φθορμασις λογοις καλα τε Θεοι κ' καλα τε Χριστοι εβλη. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 24. p. 182, &c.

“ration

“ration who were favoured with their  
 “divine instructions, then the system of  
 “atheistical error commenced, through the  
 “deceits of the heterodox; who, when none  
 “of the apostles were remaining, with open  
 “face undertook to oppose their know-  
 “ledge falsely so called, to the preaching  
 “of the truth \*.” What could be meant  
 by *atheistical errors* and by *knowledge falsely  
 so called*, but the principles of the Gnostics?  
 No characters of any sect in ecclesiastical  
 history are more clearly marked than these.  
 In later times, indeed, almost every errone-  
 ous opinion was called atheistical; but it was  
 not so in that early age; and *knowledge falsely  
 so called*, is as descriptive of the Gnostics as  
 if they had been mentioned by name.

† Ἐπι τέλεις ὁ αὐλὸς ἀντὶ διηγόμενος τὰ κατὰ τὰς διδασκίμας,  
 ἐπιλέγει ὡς ἀρα μέχρι τῶν τότε χρόνων παρθένος καθάρα καὶ ἀδιαφόρος  
 ἔμεινεν ἡ ἐκκλησία ἐν ἀλήθῃ πρὸς σκοπέι φωλευσίων εἰσεὶ τότε, τῶν εἰ καὶ  
 τινὲς ὑπῆρχον, παραφθείρειν ἐπιχειρῶντων τὸν ὑγιῆ κανόνα τῆς σωτηρίας  
 κτηνῶν ὡς δ' ὁ ἱερός τῶν Ἀποστόλων χορὸς διαφορὸν εἰληφεί τῆ βίβ  
 τέλος, παρελθόντων τε ἡ γενεὰ ἐκείνη τῶν αὐλῶν ἀκοαίς τῆς εὐθείας  
 ἐπακροῦσαι κατήξιωμένων, τῆν μαυρία τῆς ἀβεί πλανῆς τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐλαμβάνει  
 ἡ συστάσις, διὰ τῆς τῶν ἑεροδιδασκάλων ἀπάτης· αἱ καὶ αἰε μὴδενὸς εἰς  
 τῶν Ἀποστόλων λειπομένη. γυμνὴ λοιπὸν ἤδη τῆ κεφαλῆ, τῶ τῆς ἀλη-  
 θείας κτηνῶν τὴν ψευδωνυμὸν γνῶσιον ἀνικηρυττεῖν ἐπεχειρῶν. Eu-  
 febii Hist. Lib. 3. cap. 32. p. 128.

S E C =

## SECTION III.

*Of Heresy according to Justin Martyr.*

C O T E M P O R A R Y with Hegesippus was Justin Martyr, the first writer that can be proved to have advanced the doctrine of the permanent personification of the logos, of which a full account will be given hereafter. He had occasion to mention both the unitarians and the Gnostics. The former, as I shall shew in its proper place, he mentions with respect, and a tacit apology for differing from them, even from those who believed that Christ was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. But the manner in which he speaks of the Gnostics is very different indeed from this. The apostle John himself does not express a greater abhorrence of their principles. He speaks of them as fulfilling our Saviour's prophecy, that there should be false christs and false prophets (the very language of Hegesippus above mentioned) who should  
deceive

deceive many. One of the passages is as follows.

“ There are, and have been, many per-  
“ fons, who pretending to be christians,  
“ have taught to say and do atheistical and  
“ blasphemous things, and they are deno-  
“ minated by us from the names of the  
“ persons whose doctrines they hold (for  
“ some of them blaspheme the maker of  
“ the universe, and him who was by him  
“ foretold to come as the Christ, and the  
“ God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in one  
“ way, and others in another) with whom  
“ we have no communication, knowing  
“ them to be atheistical, wicked, and im-  
“ pious persons, who, instead of reverencing  
“ Jesus, confess him in name only. They  
“ call themselves christians, in the same  
“ manner as those among the heathens in-  
“ scribe the name of God, on the work  
“ of their own hands, and defile themselves  
“ with wicked and atheistical rites. Some of  
“ them are called Marcionites, some Valen-  
“ tinians, some Basilidians, some Saturnia-  
“ nians, and others go by other names, each  
“ from their peculiar tenets; in the same  
“ manner

“ manner as those who addict themselves  
 “ to philosophy, are denominated from the  
 “ founders of their respective sects. And,  
 “ as I have said, Jesus, knowing what  
 “ would come to pass after his death, fore-  
 “ told that there would be such men among  
 “ his followers\*.”

He must be entirely unacquainted with ecclesiastical history who can imagine that any of the characters here mentioned are descriptive of any other class of men than the Gnostics. For they were persons whose tenets were deemed *atheistical*, who went by the names of certain leaders, who are par-

\* Εἰσιν ἐν κ' εὐγενόλο, ἡ φίλοι ἀνδρες, πολλοί, οἱ ἀδελφὴ καὶ βλασφημία λεγέειν καὶ πράττειν ἐδίδαξαν, ἐν ὀνομαί τῆ Ἰησοῦ προσελθούσες· καὶ εἰσιν ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἀπο τῆς προσωνομίας τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐξ ἕκαστῆ διδάχῃ καὶ γνῶμῃ πρῶτο· (ἀλλοὶ γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοι τρόποι βλασφημεῖν τὸν πατήρη τῶν ὁλῶν, καὶ τὸν ὑφ' αὐτῆς προφητεῖουμένου ἐλευσεσθαι χριστῶν, καὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἀβραάμ, καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακώβ, διδασκῶσιν· ὡν ἕθεν κοινονεμεν, οἱ γνῶριζούσες ἀδελφὴ καὶ ἀσθεῖς, καὶ ἀδικῶς καὶ ἀνομῶς αὐτῆς ὑπαρχούσας, καὶ αὐτὴ τῆ τὸν Ἰησοῦν σεβεῖν, ὀνομαί μόνου ὁμολογεῖν· καὶ χριστιανῶς εὐαγγέλιον λεγῶσιν, ὡν τρόπον, οἱ ἐν τοῖς ἐθνεσι τὸ ὄνομα τῆ θεῶς ἐπιγραφῶσιν τοῖς χειροποιήτοῖς, καὶ ἀνομῶς καὶ ἀθεοῖς τελείαις κοινονεσι) καὶ εἰσιν αὐτῶν οἱ μὲν τινας καλλῶμενοι Μαρκεῖοι, οἱ δὲ Οὐαλερίουοι, οἱ δὲ Βασιλιδεοῖς, οἱ δὲ Σατορηλῶοι, καὶ ἄλλοι ἄλλῶ ὀνομαί, ἀπο τῆ ἀρχηγείας τῆς γνῶμῆς ἐκαστῶς, ὀνομαζόμενος—ὡς καὶ ἐκ αὐτῶν ἡμεῖς—τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τῶν μετ' αὐτῶν γενησομένων προσηγορῆν ἐπισταμεδα. Dial. p. 208.

particularly



ticularly specified, all of them known to be Gnostics, and they were not in communion with the catholic church.

The other passage is to the same purpose. After speaking of some who held the true christian doctrine, he adds, “ For I have  
 “ shewn you that there are some who call  
 “ themselves indeed christians, but are athe-  
 “ istical, and wicked heretics, teaching blas-  
 “ phemous, atheistical, and stupid doctrines.  
 “ If you compare them with those who are  
 “ called christians, they will not agree with  
 “ them, but dare to blaspheme the God of  
 “ Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God  
 “ of Jacob ; who also say that there is no re-  
 “ surrection of the dead, but that immedi-  
 “ ately after death souls are received into hea-  
 “ ven. Do not take these to be christians\*.”

\* Τες γὰρ λεγόμενες μὲν χριστιανῶς, οὐκ αὖτε ἀθεῖς, καὶ ἀσεβῆς αἰρεσιώδεις, οἱ κατὰ πᾶν βλασφημία, καὶ ἀθεῖα, καὶ ἀνοήτῃ διδασκῶσιν ἐδήλωτα σοι. — Εἰ γὰρ καὶ συνέβαλετε ὑμεῖς τισὶ λεγομένοις χριστιανοῖς, καὶ τὸ μὴ ὁμολογεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημεῖν τοῦ μωσίου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἀβραάμ, καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰσαακ, καὶ τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ, οἱ καὶ λεγῶσιν μὴ εἶναι νεκρῶν ἀνάστασιν, ἀλλ’ αἷμα τῷ ἀποθνήσκῃ τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, μὴ ὑπαλαβῆτε αὐτῶς χριστιανῶς. Dial.

p. 311.

Had

Had the writer expressly said that the persons he was describing were Gnostics, and *Gnostics only*, he could not have spoken more plainly than he has done, especially in saying that they denied the resurrection, which none but Gnostics ever did, but which was done by all Gnostics without exception. If any person can think otherwise, I scruple not to say, that he has not the smallest tincture of that kind of knowledge which is requisite to qualify him for judging in these matters. It may be safely concluded, therefore, that, in the opinion of Justin, there were no heretics besides the Gnostics; and he does not appear to spare any whom he thought deserved the name of heretics, and were not in communion with the catholic church.

Lastly, I would observe, that it is after giving an account of Simon, Menander, and Marcion, known Gnostics, and without any allusion to unitarians, that Justin mentions his writing a treatise against all heresies. Apol. 1. p. 44.

## SECTION IV.

*Of Heresy according to Irenæus.*

**I**RENÆUS, who wrote a very large work on the subject of heresy, forty or fifty years after the time of Justin, and in a country where it is probable there were fewer unitarians than where Justin lived, again and again characterizes heretics in such a manner, as makes it evident that even *he* did not consider any other class of men as properly entitled to that appellation besides the Gnostics. He expresses great dislike of the Ebionites; but though he appears to have known none of them besides those who denied the miraculous conception, he never directly calls them heretics, and he takes no notice at all of any *gentile unitarians*, though it will appear that they composed the majority of the common people among christians.

In the introduction to his work it is exceedingly evident, that Irenæus had no view to any persons whatever besides the Gnostics;

Gnostics; for he mentions their distinguishing opinions, and no others, speaking of them as “drawing men off from him that made and governs the world, as if they had something higher and greater to show than he who made the heavens and the earth, and all things therein, and as holding blasphemous and impious opinions\*.”

Irenæus considered Simon Magus as the person from whom all heresies sprung †, which was an opinion universally received in the christian church, and a proof that he thought no other opinions to be properly heretical, besides those which might have been derived from him. But his doctrines were those of the Gnostics, and so directly opposite to those of the unitatians,

\* Ως υψηλότερον τι κ' μείζον έχοντες επιδείξαι τε τον υρανον, κ' την γην, κ' παύλα τα εν αύλοις πεποιηκότος θεου. πειθανώς μεν επαχόμενοι δια λογων τεχνης τις ακεραιως εις τον τε ζήθειν τροπον, ακιδανως δε απολλυντες αύλις εν τω βλασφημον, κ' ασέβη την γνωμην αύλων καίασκευαζεν εις τον Δημιουργον, μηδε εν τω διακρινεν δυναμενον το ψευδος απο τς αληθους.

† Simon autem Samaritanus, ex quo universæ hæreses substiterunt, habet hujusmodi sectæ materiam. Lib. 1. cap. 20. p. 94. Lib. 3. Pref. p. 198.

that they were never considered as having the same source. It is likewise a proof of Irenæus considering the Gnostics as the only proper heretics, that, speaking of heretics in general, as foretold in the scriptures, he says that “ though they come “ from different places, and teach different “ things, they all agree in the same blas- “ phemy against the maker of all things, “ and derogating from the salvation of “ men \*.” He likewise says that “ the “ doctrine of Valentinus comprehended all “ heresies †, that “ by overturning his sys- “ tem, all heresy is overturned ‡,” that “ they all blasphemed in supposing the

\* Per omnes hæreticos qui prædicti sunt hi enim omnes, quamvis ex differentibus locis egrediantur, et differentia doceant, in idem tamen blasphemiam concurrent propositum, letaliter vulnerantes, docendo blasphemiam in Deum factorem et nutritorem nostrum, et derogando salutem hominis. Lib. 4. Pref. p. 275.

† In quo et ostendimus doctrinam eorum recapitulationem esse omnium hæreticorum. Ibid. p. 274.

‡ Quapropter et in secundo tanquam speculum habuimus eos totius everisionis. Qui enim his contradicunt secundum quod oportet, contradicunt omnibus qui sunt malæ sententiæ; et qui hos evertunt, evertunt omnem hæresim. Ibid.

“ maker

“ maker of all things to be an evil being,  
 “ and that they blasphemed our Lord,  
 “ dividing Jesus from the Christ \*” It  
 could never have been said by any person,  
 that the doctrine of Valentinus compre-  
 hended that of the unitarians, that the  
 unitarians were ever said to blaspheme the  
 maker of all things, or to divide Jesus from  
 the Christ.

Irenæus likewise says, that “ there was  
 “ a connexion among all the heretics, ex-  
 “ cept that Tatian advanced something that  
 “ was new †.” But what connexion was  
 there ever supposed to be between the te-  
 nents of the Gnostics and those of the uni-  
 tarians? He likewise speaks of all heretics  
 “ as having quitted the church, and taxing

\* Super omnes est enim blasphema regula ipsorum :  
 quando quidem factorem et fabricatorem, qui est unus  
 Deus, secundum quod ostendimus, de Labe sive defec-  
 tione eum emissum dicunt. Blasphemant autem et in  
 Dominum nostrum, abscindentes et dividentes Jesum a  
 Christo. Ibid.

† Connexio quidem factus omnium hæreticorum, quem-  
 admodum ostendimus; hoc autem a semetipso adinve-  
 nit, uti novum aliquid præter reliquos inferens. Lib. 3.  
 cap. 39. p. 265.

“ the holy presbyters with ignorance ; not  
 “ considering how much better is an igno-  
 “ rant person, who is religious, than a  
 “ blasphemous and impious sophist \* .”  
 Speaking of the Gnostics, he says, that  
 “ the apostles were so far from thinking as  
 “ they did, that they signified by the holy  
 “ spirit that they who then began to teach  
 “ their doctrine were introduced by satan,  
 “ to overturn the faith of some, and  
 “ withdraw them from life † .” He like-  
 wise says, that “ all the heretics were much  
 “ later than the bishops to whom the apos-  
 “ tles committed the churches ‡ .” He  
 meant, probably, the celebrated Gnostics,

\* Qui ergo relinquunt præconium ecclesiæ, imperitiã sanctorum presbyterorum arguunt, non contemplantes quanto pluris sit idiota religiosus a blasphemo et impudente sophista. Lib. 5. cap. 20. p. 430.

† Necessè habemus, universam apostolorum de Domino nostro Jesu Christo sententiam adhibere, et ostendere, eos non solum nihil tale sensisse de eo, verum amplius et significasse per spiritum sanctum, qui inciperint talia docere, summissi a satana, uti quorundam fidem everterent, et abstraherant eos a vita. Lib. 3. cap. 17. p. 238.

‡ Omnes enim ii valde posteriores sunt quam episcopi quibus apostoli tradiderunt ecclesias. Ibid. cap. 20. p. 430.

who

who appeared in the time of Adrian ; whereas he could not but know that the Ebionites, and the unitarians in general, were very considerable before that time. He must have meant the Gnostics, when he said, that “ all heretics were agreed that “ the maker of the world was ignorant of “ the power above him \*.” He likewise evidently considered all heretics to be Gnostics in many other passages of his work †.

How little is it that Irenæus says of the Ebionites, and with how little severity in his large treatise concerning *heresy*. It is not one four hundredth part of the whole, while all the rest is employed on the different branches of Gnosticism. The harshest epithet that he applies to them is that of *vani*, which, considering the manner of the ancients, is certainly very moderate. *Vani autem et Ebionai ‡.* He says, indeed, that “ God will judge them”, and

\* Omnes enim hæretici decreverunt, demiurgum ignorare eam quæ sit super eum virtutem. Lib. 3. cap. 1. p. 219.

† See lib. 2. cap. 55. p. 185. lib. 3. cap. 1. p. 199.

‡ Lib. 5. cap. 1. p. 394.



“ how can they be saved, if it be not God  
 “ that worketh out their salvation upon  
 “ earth\*.” But this is no sentence of  
 damnation passed upon them in particular  
 for holding their doctrine, but an argu-  
 ment used by him to refute them; and is  
 the same as if he had said, mankind in ge-  
 neral could not be saved, if Christ had not  
 been God as well as man.

That Irenæus did not mean to pass a  
 sentence of what we should now call *dam-  
 nation* upon the Ebionites, is, I think,  
 evident from what he says concerning them  
 in the 21st chapter of his third book, and  
 which has the appearance of great harsh-  
 nefs. “ If they persist,” he says, “ in their  
 “ error, not receiving the word of incor-  
 “ ruption, they continue in mortal flesh,  
 “ and are subject to death, not receiving  
 “ the antidote of life †.” The idea of this

\* Ανακρινει δε κ̅ τ̅ς Ηβ̅ων̅ς· πως δυναίται σωθῆναι, εἰ μὴ ὁ  
 Θεὸς γιν̅ ὁ τὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτῶν ἐπι γῆς ἐργασασμένος· ἢ πως ἀνθρώπος  
 χωρησῆι εἰς θεόν. εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς ἐχωρηθῆι εἰς ἀνθρώπον. Lib. 4.  
 cap. 59. p. 358.

† Qui nude tantum hominem eum dicunt ex Joseph  
 generatum perseverantes in servitute pristinæ inobedientiæ  
 moriuntur. Non recipientes autem verbum incorrup-  
 tionis

writer and that of the Fathers in general was, that Christ recovered for man that immortality which Adam had lost; so that without his interference the whole race of mankind must have perished in the grave. This he represents as the punishment of the Ebionites. But he certainly could not mean that the Ebionites, *as such*, should continue in the grave, while all the rest of mankind would rise from the dead. He must, therefore, have meant, not that they in particular, but that mankind in general could have had no resurrection if their doctrine had been true.

Irenæus no where directly calls the Ebionites heretics. I had thought that in one passage he had included them in that appellation; but observing, that in his Introduction, and in other places, in which he speaks of *heretics in general*, he evidently meant the Gnostics only, and could not carry his views any further, I was led to re-consider that particular passage, and I found that I had been mistaken in my construction of it.

*tionis perseverant in carne mortali, et sunt debitores mortis, antidotum vitæ non accipientes,* p. 249.

“ All

“ All heretics,” he says, “ being un-  
 “ taught, and ignorant of the dispensations  
 “ of God, and especially of that which re-  
 “ lates to man, as being blind with respect  
 “ to the truth, oppose their own salvation ;  
 “ some introducing another Father besides  
 “ the maker of the world ; others saying,  
 “ that the world and the matter of it was  
 “ made by angels,” &c. and, after mention-  
 ing other similar opinions, he adds, “ others,  
 “ not knowing the dispensation of the vir-  
 “ gin, say that he (Jesus) was begotten by  
 “ Joseph. Some say that neither the soul  
 “ nor the body can receive eternal life, but  
 “ the internal man only,” &c. i. e. they  
 denied the resurrection \*.”

\* *Indocti omnes hæretici, ignorantes dispositiones Dei, et inficii ejus quæ est secundum hominem dispensationis, quippe cæcutientes circa veritatem, ipsi suæ contradicunt salutis. Alii quidem alterum introducentes præter demiurgum, patrem. Alii autem ab angelis quibusdam dicentes factum esse mundum, et substantiam ejus. Alii quidem porro et longe separatam ab eo, qui est secundum ipsos patre, a semetipsa floruisse, et esse ex se natam. Alii autem in his quæ continentur a patre, de labe et ignorantia substantiam habuisse. Alii autem manifestum adventum Domini contemnunt, incarnationem ejus non recipientes. Alii autem rursus ignorantes virginis dispensationem, ex Joseph dicunt eum generatum. Et quidam quidem neque animam*

Now as Cerinthus, Carpocrates, and other Gnostics, denied the miraculous conception, as well as the Ebionites; and all the rest of this description, both before and after this circumstance, evidently belongs to the Gnostics only, and as in no other place whatever does he comprehend them in his definition of *heresy*, it is natural to conclude that he had no view to them even here, but only to those Gnostics, who, in common with them, denied the miraculous conception. If there be any other passage in Irenæus in which he calls, or seems to call, the Ebionites *heretics*, I have overlooked it. The Ebionites were Jews, and had no communion with the Gentiles, at least that appears; and Irenæus says nothing at all of the unitarians among the Gentiles (who, in the time of Origen, generally believed the miraculous conception) though, as appears from other evidence, they constituted the great mass of the unlearned christians.

animam suam, neque corpus recipere posse dicunt æternam vitam, sed tantum hominem interiorem. Esse autem hunc eum qui in eis sit sensus, volunt, quem et solum ascendere ad perfectum decernunt. Alii autem anima salvata, non participari corpus ipsorum eam quæ est a Deo salutem. Lib. 5. cap. 19. p. 429.

## SECTION V.

*Of Heresy according to Clemens Alexandrinus,  
Tertullian, Origen, and Firmilian.*

CLEMENS Alexandrinus makes frequent mention of heretics, and expresses as much abhorrence of them as Justin Martyr does, but it is evident that in all the places in which he speaks of them, his idea of heresy was confined to Gnosticism.

He considers it as an answer to all heretics to prove that “there is one God, the “Almighty Lord, who was preached by the “law and the prophets, and also in the “blessed gospel\*.” He also speaks of heresy as “borrowed from a barbarous philosophy;” and says of heretics that “though they say there is one God, and “sing hymns to Christ, it was not according to truth; for that they introduced “another God, and such a Christ as the

\* Και απαταις ενλευθεν ταις αιρεσεσιν, ενι δεκνουντι θεον, και Κυριον πανωμοραλορα, τον δια νομου και προφητων, προς δε και τα μακαριου ευαγγελιου ηηστωσ κηκησυγμενον. Strom. lib. 6. p. 475.

“ prophets

“ prophets had not foretold\*.” He likewise speaks of heretics in general as having a high opinion of their own knowledge †. He calls them *δοξισσοι*, *men who think that they have found the truth*, p. 755, and *υποδοξοσοριας επηρημενοι*, *elated with a conceit of their knowledge*, p. 759. He says that “ heresy “ began in the time of Adrian,” when it is well known that Basilides and the most distinguished of the Gnostics made their appearance ‡. He says, that of the heretics some were distinguished by the names of particular persons, as those of Valentinus, Marcion, and Basilides, some by the place of their residence, others by their tenets, &c. mentioning none but Gnostics||. It

\* Διοτιπερ αι καλα την βαρβαρον φιλοσοφιαν αιρεσεις και θεου λεγωνσιν ενα, και χριστον υμωνσιν, καλα περιληψιν λεγωνσιν, κ προς αληθειαν· αλλον γαρ τον θεον περιεურισκασιν, κ τον χριστον εκ ως αι προφητειαι παραδιδοσσι εκδεχουσαι. Strom. lib. 6. p. 675. See also p. 542. 662.

† Οισιν γνωσεως ειληφθων. Strom. lib. 7. p. 754.

‡ Κατω δε περι της Αδριανης της βασιλευς χρονος αι τας αιρεσεις επινουσαυτες γεγονασι. Strom. lib. 7. p. 764.

|| Των δ' αιρεσεων αι μεν απο ονοματος προσαγορευουσαι, ως η απο Ουαλεντινου κ Μαρκιωνος κ Βασιλειδου, και την Μαιδιν αυχωςι προσαγορευθαι δοξαν· μια γαρ η πανηλων γεγνε των αποστολων ωσπερ διδασκαλια,

may only be conjectured that he meant the Ebionites by the *Peratici* enumerated by him among those who had their denomination from the place of their residence; but this is the only passage in the word which occurs. It is the more remarkable that this writer should omit the unitarians, as he mentions fourteen different heretics by name, and ten heresies by character.

As the strict Ebionites hold no communion with the gentile christians, it is very possible that Clemens Alexandrinus might insert them in a catalogue of heretics, and allude to them under the name of *Peratici*, without intending any censure of their doctrine with respect to Christ. Besides, this was a name given them, as he says, from their place of residence, and therefore did not include the unitarians among the gentiles.

καλια, εως δε χ' η παραδοσις . αι δε, απο τοπικ, ως οι Περατικοι . αι δε, απο εθνης, ως η των Φρυγων . οι δε, απο ενεργειας, ως η των Εγκρατιστων . αι δε, απο δογματων ιδιαζοντων, ως η των Δουλικων . χ' η των Αιματιστων . αι δε, απο υποδεσεων, χ' ων τελμημασιν, ως Κουισται τε χ' οι Οφισανοι προσαγορευομενοι . αι δε, αφ' ων παρρηνομως επετηδευσαν τε χ' εισημνησαν. SIMON. 7. p. 765.

Tertullian represents our Saviour as alluding to false teachers, who said that he was not born of a virgin; but it is evident from the whole passage, that he referred to the Gnostics only, who said that it was disgraceful to him to be so born\*.

In all other places in which I have found Tertullian speak of heresy in general, it is most evident that his ideas went no farther than to the opinions of the Gnostics, except that he once calls Hebion a heretic. And then he expressly makes his heresy to consist in his observance of the Jewish ritual †.

“ Heresies,” he says, “ do not differ from  
“ idolatry, having the same author, and

\* Prænunciaveram plane futuros fallaciæ magistros in meo nomine, et prophetarum et apostolorum etiam; et discipulis meis eadem ad vos prædicare mandaveram, semel evangelium, et ejusdem regulæ doctrinam apostolis meis delegaveram: sed quum vos non crederetis, libuit mihi postea aliqua inde mutare. Resurrectionem promiseram etiam carnis, sed recogitavi ne implere non possem. Natum me ostenderam ex virgine, sed postea turpe mihi visum est, &c. De Præscriptione, sect. 44. p. 218.

† Ad Galatas scribens invehitur in observatores et defensores circumcisionis et legis. Hebionis hæresis est. De Præf. sect. 33. p. 214.

“ the



“ the same work with idolaters, for that  
 “ they make another god against the crea-  
 “ tor, or if they acknowledge one creator,  
 “ they discourse of him in a manner dif-  
 “ ferent from the truth\*.” “ Heretics,”  
 he says, “ deny that God is to be feared †,”  
 which agrees with his saying, that “ the  
 “ heathen philosophers were the patriarchs  
 “ of heresy ‡,” for they held that doctrine;  
 but it was very remote from any thing  
 that is ever laid to the charge of the uni-  
 tarians.

Heretics,” he says, “ associated with the  
 “ magi, with fortune-tellers, with astrolo-  
 “ gers, with philosophers; being actuated

— \* Neque ab idolatria distare hærefes, cum et auctoris et operis ejusdem sint cujus et idolatria. Deum aut fingunt alium adversus creatorem, aut si unicum creatorem confitentur, aliter eum differunt quam in vero. De Præscriptione, sect. 40. Opera, p. 217.

† Negant deum timendum. Ibid. sect. 43. p. 218.

‡ Hereticorum patriarchæ philosophi. Ad. Herm. sect. 8. p. 236.

Ipsæ denique hærefes a philosophia subornantur. Inde æones, et formæ nescio quæ, et trinitas hominis apud Valentinum. Platonicus fuerat. De Præscriptione, sect. 7. p. 201.

“ by

“ by a principle of curiosity ; so that the  
 “ quality of their faith may judged of from  
 “ their manner of life ; for discipline is  
 “ the index of doctrine\*.”

The whole of this account is incon-  
 sistent with Tertullian’s considering unita-  
 rians as heretics. But much more is his say-  
 ing, that “ the Valentinians were the most  
 “ numerous of all the heretics†, and that the  
 “ heretics had nothing to do with their  
 “ discipline. Their want of communion,”  
 he says, “ shews that they are foreign to  
 “ us‡,” For it is most evident that those  
 whom he calls *simplices* and *idiotæ*, were  
 ranked by him among the *credentes*, or *be-*  
*lievers*. They were even the *major pars*  
*credentium*, though unitarians, and holding

\* Notata etiam sunt commercia hæreticorum cum magis  
 quampluribus, cum circulatoribus, cum astrologis, cum  
 philosophis, curiositati scilicet deditis.—Adeo ut de genere  
 conversationis qualitas fidei æstimari potest : doctrinæ in-  
 dex disciplina est. De Præscriptione, f. 43. p. 218.

† Valentiniani frequentissimum plane collegium inter  
 hæreticos. Ad Valen. sect. 1. p. 250.

‡ Hæretici autem nullum habent consortium nostræ dis-  
 ciplinæ, quos extraneos utique testatur ipsa ademptio com-  
 municationis. De Baptismo, sect. 15. p. 230.

the doctrine of the trinity in abhorrence, as we shall see in its proper place.

Origen says, that “heretics borrowed  
“from the Greek philosophy, from abstruse  
“mysteries and from strolling astrologers\*.”  
Jerom also says “the vain words of the phi-  
“losophers, which, in the doctrine of Plato  
“have killed the children of the church, is  
“turned into divine wrath and blood to  
“them †.” Valentinus is said to have been  
a Platonist; but it is certain that, in general,  
the philosophy of the Gnostics was that of  
the Oriental sect. Plotinus, we have seen,  
calls it a foreign philosophy. With much  
more justice might the Gnostics have re-  
criminated on Origen and his friends, for  
their principles were certainly more pro-  
perly those of the Platonists.

Farther, Origen says that “heretics may  
“be proved to be atheists by their doc-

\* *Αλλ' εστιν αιολις τα δεξαζομενα αρχην μεν εκ της Ελληνικης σοφιας λαβοντα εκ δογματων φιλοσοφημενων, κη μυστηριων επιτεχειρημενων, και αστρολογων ρεμβομενων.* Philosophumena, p. 17. 185.

† *Vana philosophorum verba, quæ in doctrinis Platonice ecclesie parvulos interimebant, in ultionem divinam illis conversa est et in cruorem.* In Pf. 77. Opera, vol. 7: p. 97.

“trines,

“trines, manners, and works\*,” which is a charge that was never advanced against the unitarians, but constantly against the Gnostics. “I wonder,” says he again, “how the heterodox can say that there are “two Gods in the Old Testament †.” He also speaks of the heretics as “studying eloquence to please their hearers, not to “convert them from vice ‡.” “Such,” again, says he, “are the heretics, who “adorn their discourse, not to convert their “hearers, but to please them ||.” Lastly, he says, “the heretics, through their great “madness, concealed their private mysteries §.” All these characters are exactly

\* *Ἴνα ἀδελφὸς αὐτῆς ἐπιδειξώμεν καὶ κατὰ γνώμην, καὶ κατὰ τρόπον, καὶ κατὰ ἔργον.* Philofophumena, p. 8. 16.

† *Ὅθεν θαυμάζειν μοι ἐπεισὶ πως δύο θεοὺς προσάπτεισιν ἀμφοτέρων τὰς διδασκίας οἱ ἑτεροδοξοὶ, ἐκ ἐλαττοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς τῆς ῥῆς ἐλγχομένοι.* Comment. vol. 2. p. 14.

‡ *Τοιαύτης εὐρησεὶ τῆς λόγους τῶν ἑτεροδοξῶν, καὶ τὰ καλλῆ τῶν παιδαγωγῶν αὐτῶν ἐκ ἐπιγροφῶν τῆς ἀκροῦσας.* In Jer. Hom. 1. Comment. vol. 1. p. 72.

|| *Tales sunt hæretici, qui orationem suam verborum decore componunt, non ut convertant audientes a vitiis, sed ut delectent.* Opera, vol. 1. p. 614.

§ *Δια τὴν υπερβαλλῶσαν τῶν ἀρετικῶν ματαιαν, οἱ διὰ τῆς σιωπῆς ἀποκροπεῖν τε τὰ ἀρρητὰ ἐσώων μυστηρίων.* Philof. p. 6.

descriptive of the Gnostics, but not one of them can be said to apply to the unitarians.

But, besides this, there are a great variety of characters by which Origen distinguishes heretics in general, and by which it may be perceived that he could not mean any besides the Gnostics.

In one place he evidently considers the *unitarians* and *heretics* separately, as two distinct classes of men; but supposes that the unitarians confounded the persons of the Father and the Son, on which account they were called *Patripassians*. But notwithstanding the evil that he says of them, he acknowledges that they adhered to their opinion as thinking that it did honour to Christ, as on other occasions he ascribes it to their regard to the one true God the Father. “We are not,” says he, “to consider those as taking the part of Christ, who think falsely concerning him, out of an idea of doing him honour. Such are those who confound the intellect of the Father and the Son, distinguishing their substance in idea and name only. Also the heretics, who, out of a de-  
“ fire

“ fire of speaking magnificently concerning  
 “ him, carry their blasphemy very high,  
 “ even to the maker of the world, are not  
 “ not on his side\*.”

Firmilian, writing to Cyprian on the subject of re-baptizing heretics, in answer to one Stephanus, who urged a direction of the apostles to that purpose, replies, that all heresies of any consequence were subsequent to the time of the apostles. The entire passage, which I shall insert in the notes, deserves the attention of the reader †.

\* Ου νομιζω γαρ ειναι υπερ αυτης τας τα ψευδη φρονησας περι αυτης φαυλασια τε δοξαζειν αυτον, οποιοι εισιν συγγενοιες πατρος κ̅ υις εννοιας, κ̅ τη υποτασει ενα διδοντες ειναι τον πατερα κ̅ τον υιον, τη επινοια μονη κ̅ τοις ονομασι, διαρρητες το εν υποκειμενον . και οι απο των αιρεσεων, φαυλασια τε μεγαλα περι αυτης φρονειν, αδυναμω εις το ψ̅ λαληντες, και κακως λεγωντες τον δημιουργον, ηκ εισιν υπερ αυτης. Comment. in Matt. vol. I. p. 471.

† Et quidem quantum ad id pertineat quod Stephanus dixit, quasi apostoli eos qui ab hæresi veniant baptizari prohibuerint, et hoc custodiendum posteris tradiderint; plenissime vos respondistis, neminem tam stultum esse qui hoc credat apostolos tradidisse, quando etiam ipsas hæreses confet execrables ac detestandas postea extitisse. Cum et Marcion Cerdonis discipulus inveniatur, fero post apostolos et post longa ab eis tempora, sacrilegam adversus Deum traditionem induxisse. Apelles quoque blasphemix ejus

It is also evident that that excellent bishop considered the Gnostics as the only heretics, when he said they had neither God, nor Lord, nor church, nor faith, &c. in common with them\*.

consentiens multa alia nova et graviora fidei ac veritati inimica addiderit. Sed et Valentini et Basilidis tempus manifestum est quod et ipsi post apostolos et post longam ætatem, adversus ecclesiam Dei sceleratis mendaciis suis rebellaverint. Ceteros quoque hæreticos constat pravas suas sectas et inventiones perverfas prout quisque errore ductus est, postea induxisse; quos omnes manifestum est a semet ipsis damnatos esse, et ante diem judicii inexcusabilem sententiam adversus semetipsos dixisse: quorum baptismum qui confirmat, quid aliud quam cum ipsis se adjudicat, et se ipse participem talibus faciendo condemnat? Cypriani Opera, vol. 2. p. 219.

\* Porro cum nobis et hæreticis nec Deus unus sit, nec Dominus unus, nec una ecclesia, nec fides una, sed nec unus spiritus, aut corpus unum; manifestum est nec baptismum nobis et hæreticis commune esse posse, quibus nihil est omnino commune. Ibid. p. 229.

## SECTION

## SECTION VI.

*Of Heresy in a later Period.*

IT is of no great consequence to carry these authorities any farther, as it is acknowledged that the unitarians were considered as heretics after the time of Origen; and it is possible that they may be, so called occasionally by him, as well as others of his time who disliked their principles. For about this time the term *heresy*, began to be applied to the doctrines which were not entertained by those more learned christians, whose opinions (being in appearance more flattering to Christ, the author of their religion) continually gained ground; though it was a long time before the common people in general could relish them. So well established, however by a long course of time, was the synonymous use of the terms *heretic*, and *Gnostic*, that they continued to be so used occasionally, even long after the decrees of councils had pronounced other doctrines to be heretical; and of this I shall give some instances.



Athanasius says, “ the heretics make to  
 “ themselves another maker of the universe  
 “ besides the Father of our Lord Jesus  
 “ Christ \*.” Indeed, Athanasius con-  
 sidered the proper unitarians in a more fa-  
 vourable light than he did either the Gnos-  
 tics or the Arians †. Again, he says, “ the  
 “ heretics, leaving the discipline of the  
 “ church, and making shipwreck of faith,  
 “ ——— make themselves another God be-  
 “ sides the true God, the Father of Christ,  
 “ who, they say, was unbegotten, the  
 “ author of evil, and the maker of the  
 “ world ‡.”

Eusebius, speaking of the heresies of  
 the Jews, and those of the Greeks, de-  
 scribes them as atheistical, some of them  
 introducing several contrary principles, and

\* Οι δε απο των αιρεσεων αλλων εαυτοις αναπλατουνται δημιουργον των παντων παρα τον πατερα τε κυριε ημων Ιηου χριστε. De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. I. p. 55.

† See Opera, vol. I. p. 975, 977, 978.

‡ Οι δε απο των αιρεσεων επεσευξες της Εκκλησιαστικης διδασκαλιας, κ̅ περι την πιστιν νακαγησαντες, κ̅ ειλοι μεν υποτασιν τε καου παραφρονασιν ειναι. αναπλατουνται δε εαυτοις παρα τον αληθινον τε χριστε πατερα θεου ελερον, κ̅ τ̅λον αγεννητον, τε καου ποιητην κ̅ της κακιας αρχηγον, τον κ̅ της κ̅ισσεως δημιουργον. Contra Gentes. Opera, vol. I. p. 6.

others

others ascribing the government of the universe to wicked persons \*. He also says, that Simon Magus was the leader of all heresy †.

Cyril of Jerusalem, whose neighbourhood seems to have abounded with Gnostics, and especially with Manicheans, advises to “hate all heretics, but especially “those who had their name from mad-“ness ‡,” meaning *Manes*; and through his whole work he generally speaks of the Gnostics as if he had thought them to be the only proper heretics, though he does not scruple occasionally to give the same appellation to others who thought differently from him. Thus he joins others in calling Simon Magus the inventor of all heresy §. “The heretics,” he says, “do “not acknowledge one God Almighty.

\* In Pfa. 64. Montfaucon's *Collectio Patrum*, vol. 1. p. 313.

† Πάσης μὲν ἐν ἀρχηγὸν αἰρέσεως πρῶτον γενέσθαι τὸν Σίμωνα πα-  
ρεῖληφάμεν. *Hist. lib. 2. cap. 13. p. 62.*

‡ Καὶ μισεῖ μὲν πάντας αἰρέτους, ἐξαιρέτως δὲ, τὸν τῆς μάγας  
ἐπινοήσαν. *Cat. 6. p. 91.*

§ Καὶ πάσης μὲν αἰρέσεως ἐυρέτης Σίμων ὁ Μάγος. *Cat. 6. p. 87.*

“ For *almighty* is he who rules over all,  
 “ and has power over all; for they who  
 “ say he is Lord of the soul, but not of the  
 “ body, do not make him perfect. For  
 “ how can he be perfect who wants either  
 “ of these? If he has power over the soul,  
 “ and not over the body, how is he al-  
 “ mighty; and if he has power over the  
 “ body, and not over the soul, how is he  
 “ almighty \*?”

The term *heretic* seems also to be appropriated to the Gnostics in the following passage: “ Nor has the devil made these  
 “ attempts with respect to the Gentiles  
 “ only; but many who are falsely called  
 “ christians, improperly called by the frag-  
 “ rant name of Christ, have impiously dared  
 “ to alienate God from his own works. I  
 “ mean the heretics, who are abominable

\* Αιρετικοί δε πάλιν, καθως ειρηται χη προτέρων, εκ οιδασιν εναι παντοκράτορα θεον. παντοκράτωρ γαρ εστιν. ο παντων κρατων, ο παντων εξουσιαζων. οι δε λεγοντες, τον μιν, εναι της ψυχης δεσποτην, τον δε, το σωματιος, η τελειον λεγουσι. πως γαρ τελειος, ο λειπων εκαστον εκατερω· ο γαρ ψυχης εξουσιασιν εχων, σωματιος δε εξουσιαν μη εχων, πως παντοκράτωρ· χη ο δεσποτων σωματων, μη εξουσιαζων δε πνευματων, πως παντοκράτωρ. Cat. 8. p. III.

“ and

“ and atheistical, pretending to be lovers of  
 “ Christ, but who are in reality haters of  
 “ Christ; for he who blasphemes the Fa-  
 “ ther of Christ is the enemy of the Son.  
 “ Ye have dared to say, that there are two  
 “ deities, one good and the other evil\*.  
 “ Let the mouths of all heretics be stop-  
 “ ped who complain of the body, or rather  
 “ of him that formed it †.” Lastly, imme-  
 diately after speaking of unitarians, who  
 said that Christ was from the earth only, he  
 mentions “ the heretics, who say that Jesus is  
 “ one person, and Christ another ‡.” Here-  
 tics seem also to be used as synonymous  
 to Gnostics in other parts of his work §.

\* Και ε μονον εν τοις εθνικοις επηγωνισατο ταυτα ο διαβολος. αλλα  
 γαρ ηδη κη πολλοι των χριστιανων ψευδως λεγομενων των τω ευωδεδεσταιω  
 χριστη ονοματι κακως προσαγορευομενων, εισημισαν ασεβως απαλλο-  
 τρισαι τον θεον των οικειων ποιηματαων. τες των αιρετικων λεγου παιδαας,  
 τες δυσωνυμιας κη αδελφιας προσποιουμενες μεν ειναι φιλοχριστας, μισο-  
 χριστας δε πασιελως. ο γαρ τον πατερα τε χριστη δυσφημων, εχθρος εστι  
 τε υιου. εισημισαν ειπειν εστω δυο θεοθηλας, μιαν αγαθην, κη μιαν κακην.

Cat. 6. p. 85.

† Φιμεδωσαν γαρ οι αιρετικοι πασιες οι κατηγορητιες των σωματων,  
 μαλλον δε αυτα τε πλασαντος. Cat. 12. p. 162.

‡ Και δια τας πλανας των αιρετικων, των λεγωντων, αλλον μεν ειναι  
 τον χριστον, αλλον δε τον Ιησυν. Cat. 10. Opera, p. 125.

§ See p. 112, 113, 116, 145.

·Bafil

Basil, distinguishing between heretics and schismatics, says, that “ the heretics were “ entirely broken off from the church, on “ account of the faith itself \* ;” and all the instances that he mentions are of Gnostics. Gregory Nazianzen, who represents the Father as the only person in the trinity who was spared in his time, says, that he was the first who had been dishonoured by the heretics, being divided into *the good* and the demiurgus †. This was never laid to the charge of the unitarians.

“ Where,” says Jerom, “ is Marcion, “ Valentinus, and all the heretics, who assert that one being was the maker of the world, that is, of things visible, and another of things invisible ‡.” “ All within “ the church,” he says again, “ are rustic “ and simple, all heretics Aristotelians or

\* Είδεξε τῶν τῶν ἐξ ἀρχῆς, τὸ μὲν τῶν ἀρετικῶν παύσεως ἀδελφῶν. Ad Amphilochem Ep. Opera, vol. 3. p. 20.

† Πρῶτος τιμωρὸς εἰς ἀγαθὸν καὶ δημιουργὸν παρὰ τῆς ἀρχαίας καινοτομίας. Or. 24. Opera, p. 428.

‡ Ubi sunt Marcion et Valentinus, et omnes hæretici, qui alterum mundi, id est, visibilium, et alterum asserunt invisibilium conditorem? In Eph. cap. 5. Opera, vol. 6, p. 173.

“ Plato

“Platonists\*.” Of these two descriptions of men, the former, by the confession of all antiquity, much better applied to the unitarians than the latter.

Chrysoftom represents it as an answer to “all the heresy that would ever arise, that Moses said, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He adds, “If the Manicheans come to you, and talk of their pre-existent matter, or Marcion, or Valentinus, or the gentiles, say to them, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth†.” This was never denied by any unitarian.

Lastly, Œcumenius represents the wisdom of the world as the cause of heresy‡;

\* Ecclesiastici enim rustici sunt et simplices : omnes vero hæretici Aristotelici et Platonici sunt. In Pf. 77. Opera, vol. 7. p. 95.

† Απαντα εξέλιξεο πασας ομου τας δικην ζιζανιων επιφουομενας αιρεσεις τη εκκλησια μαλωθεν ανασπων δια Ιε ειπειν· εν αρχη εποικησεν ο θεος τον ουρανον κη την γην. και γαρ Μανιχαιος προσελθη λεγων την υλην προυπαρχειν· και Μαρκιων, και Ουαδελιμος, και Ελληνων παιδες, λεγε προς αυτον· εν αρχη εποικησεν ο θεος τον ουρανον κη την γην. In Gen. cap. 1. Opera, vol. 2. p. 13.

‡ Τις σοφος εν υμιν. Φιλαρχοι οντες οι ανθρωποι, κη τη σοφια τε κοσμος τετα αυχαινες, και εριν κη ζηλον των ορθων διδασκαλων εκηρυτ-  
του

and this writer always speaks of the unitarians as a *simple* people. These are all evident traces of its having been an original opinion, that the Gnostics were the only heretics; since the language and the sentiment occurred so frequently after the principle itself had been abandoned, which is a thing by no means uncommon.

Ἰὸν, οχλαγωγούνας ἀπλῶς καὶ φθόρον πρὸς τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, καὶ παραμυγνύνας τοῖς θεοῖς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα, ἵνα τῇ καινοθῆτι τῶν λεγομένων ἐπισπωγῶνται τοὺς ἀκροῦτας. ὡς ἐν καὶ αἰρεσεῖς ἐξηλθον. In Jac. Opera, vol. 2. p. 465.

C H A P .

## CHAPTER V.

*Of the Apostles Creed, as a guard against Gnosticism.*

NOTHING perhaps that has hitherto been advanced can give us so clear an idea of the extreme dread which the catholic christians entertained of the principles of the Gnostics, as an attention to the several articles of that *creed* which is commonly called *the apostles*, all of which, in its original state, were evidently intended to exclude the Gnostics, and no other class of persons whatever.

A profession of faith in the divine mission of Christ, and generally of repentance also, which had been the great object of John's baptism, to which that of Christ succeeded, was always required of every person who was a candidate for admission into the christian church. But while there were no heresies that gave much alarm to the body of christians, it was thought sufficient to make the  
the



the catechumens simply to profess their faith in Christ, or, if they were Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah; and such are all the instances of baptism that are mentioned in the book of Acts. But afterwards, whether in the time of the apostles, or not, but very probably before the death of John, other articles were added, intended to exclude persons who were not thought to be proper members of christian churches, though they did profess to believe in the divine mission of Christ. At what time each of these articles was inserted in the creed is not known; and indeed the practice of the church appears to have been various in this respect, some articles having been used in one church, and others in another, and still less was the same *form of words* strictly adhered to.

We are able, however, in some measure, to trace the progress of this baptismal creed by its being published, with more or less of comment, by different christian writers, from Irenæus, who is the first who has given any of the articles of it, to Ruffinus, who first published a professed commentary upon

upon it, and since whose time no considerable alterations have been made in it. And it is remarkable that Irenæus introduces this creed into his treatise on heresy, as a proof that the persons he wrote against were condemned by it; and in those parts of his work he condemns none but the Gnostics. Accordingly we read in Optatus, that “heretics deserted the sacred *symbol*\*,” for so this creed was called, and this was not true of any set of persons whatever besides the Gnostics.

We have accounts of this creed in two different places of the work of Irenæus; and though it is evident that he does not give this creed in the very words in which it was delivered to the catechumens (indeed the two copies of the creed that he does give, differing considerably from each other, is a proof that he did not *mean* to give the creed itself, but only a *commentary* upon it) it is easily to perceive by his gloss what was the real object of each article in it, and for this purpose I shall recite both his copies.

\* Hæretici vero, veritatis exules, fani et verissimi symboli desertores, —lib. 1. p. 13.

“ He who holds without swerving the  
“ rule of truth which he received at bap-  
“ tism, will understand the names, phrases,  
“ and parables of the scriptures, and will  
“ not know this blasphemous hypothesis.—  
“ The churches planted by the apostles,  
“ and their disciples to the end of the earth,  
“ received that faith which is in one God,  
“ the Father Almighty, who made the hea-  
“ vens and the earth, and the sea, and all  
“ things that are in them ; and in one Jesus  
“ Christ, the son of God, incarnate for our  
“ salvation ; and in the holy spirit, who  
“ preached by the prophets the dispensa-  
“ tion of the gospel, and the coming, and  
“ the birth by a virgin, and his sufferings  
“ and resurrection from the dead, and the  
“ ascent of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ  
“ into heaven in the flesh, and his return  
“ from heaven in the glory of the Father,  
“ to complete all things, and to raise all  
“ the flesh of mankind ; that to Christ Je-  
“ sus, our Lord and God, and Saviour,  
“ and king, according to the will of the  
“ invisible Father, every knee might bow,  
“ of things in heaven, and things in earth,  
“ and

“ and things under the earth, that every  
 “ tongue should confess to him, and that he  
 “ should judge all in righteousness; that  
 “ he might send into everlasting fire spiri-  
 “ tual wickedness, the angels who trans-  
 “ gressed, and who apostatized, the ungod-  
 “ ly, the wicked, and lawless, and blas-  
 “ phemous men; but give life immortal,  
 “ and eternal glory, to the righteous, the  
 “ holy, and those who keep his command-  
 “ ments, those who remain in his love  
 “ from the beginning, and also those who  
 “ repent\*.

\* Οὐτω δὲ καὶ ὁ τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἀληθείας ἀκλινη ἐν εαυτῷ καλεχῶν, οὐ  
 δια τῆ βαπτισματός εἰληφε, τὰ μὲν ἐκ τῶν γραφῶν ὀνομασία, καὶ τὰς  
 λέξεις, καὶ τὰς παραβολὰς ἐπιγινώσκει, τὴν δὲ βλασφημίαν ὑποδεσιν  
 ταύτην ἐκ ἐπιγινώσκει.

HMEN γὰρ ἐκκλησία, καὶ πτερ καὶ ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἕως περὰ τῶν  
 τῆς γῆς διεσπαρμένη, πὰρα δὲ τῶν ἀποστόλων, καὶ τῶν ἐκεῖνων μαθητῶν  
 παραλαβῶσα τὴν εἰς ἕνα θεὸν πατέρα πάντοκρατορα τὴν πεποινηκότα τῶν  
 ἕραν. καὶ τὴν γῆν, καὶ τὰς θάλασσας, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αἰσίν, πῶσιν. καὶ  
 εἰς ἕνα χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ σαρκωθέντα ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμέρας  
 σωτηρίας· καὶ εἰς Πνεῦμα ἅγιον, τὸ διὰ τῶν προφητῶν κεκρυμμένον τὰς  
 αἰωνομαίας, καὶ τὰς ἐλευθείας, καὶ τὴν ἐκ πατρὸς γενέσθαι, καὶ τὸ πατὸς καὶ τὴν  
 ἐγερθῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν, καὶ τὴν ἐνσαρκῶν εἰς τῆς ἕρας ἀναληψῆναι τῆς ἡγετημένης  
 χριστῆ Ἰησοῦ τῆς κυρίας ἡμῶν, καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν ἕραν ἐν τῇ δοξῇ τοῦ Πατρὸς  
 παρθεσίαν αὐτῆς, ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα, καὶ ἀναστῆσαι  
 πᾶσαν σάρκα πάσης ἀνθρωπότητος, ἵνα χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τῷ κυρίῳ ἡμῶν,  
 καὶ θεῷ, καὶ σωτῆρι, καὶ βασιλεῖ, καὶ τὴν εὐδοκίαν τοῦ Πατρὸς τῆς αὐραβῆς,

The other copy, if it may be so called, of the baptismal creed is shorter than this, but to the same purpose; representing all christians as believing “ in one God the  
 “ maker of heaven and earth, and of all  
 “ things that are therein, by Jesus Christ,  
 “ the son of God, who from his great love  
 “ to his creatures, submitted to be born of  
 “ a virgin; he by himself uniting man to  
 “ God, and suffered under Pontus Pilate;  
 “ and having risen again, and being received  
 “ into glory, will come to save those who  
 “ are saved, and to judge those who are  
 “ judged, and send into everlasting fire  
 “ those who change the truth, and despise  
 “ the Father and his coming\*.

παν γου καμψη επερασιων κη επιγειων κη καλαχθονιων, κη πασα γλωσ-  
 σα εξομολογησηται αυτω, κη κρισιν δικαιαν εν τοις πασι ποιησηται. τα  
 μεν πνευμαλικά της πονηριας, κη αγγελος παραβεβηκοιας, κη εν αποστα-  
 σια γεγενειας, κη τους ασεβεις, κη αδικας, κη ανομιας, κη βλασφημιας  
 των ανθρωπων εις το αιωνιον πυρ πεμψη· τοις δε δικαιοις, κη οσιοις, κη  
 τας ειλολας αυτης τεληροκοσι, κη εν τη αγαπη αυτη διαμεμενηκοσι τοις απ'  
 αρχης, τοις δε εκ μελακοιας, ζωνη χαρισαμενοσ. αφθαρσιαν δωρησηται,  
 κη δοξαν αιωνιαν περιποιηση. Lib. i. cap. 2. p. 45.

\* In unum Deum credentes fabricatorem cæli et terræ,  
 et omnium quæ in eis sunt, per Christum Jesum Dei fili-  
 um. Qui propter eminentissimam erga figmentum suum  
 dilectionem, eam quæ esset ex virgine generationem suffi-  
 nuit,

The articles in our present creed to which those in these two glosses correspond, are easily perceived to be the following. “ I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.” To these perhaps may be added the article which, in a still more explicit manner, expresses the resurrection of the dead, or as it was more anciently expressed *of the flesh*.

These are certainly all the articles to which those in the two glosses of Irenæus can be supposed to correspond; and nothing

nuit, ipse per se hominem adunans Deo; et passus sub Pontio Pilato et resurgens, et in claritate receptus, in gloria venturus salvator eorum qui salvantur, et iudex eorum qui judicantur, et mittens in ignem æternum transfiguratōres veritatis, et contemptores Patris sui et adventus ejus-  
 Lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 206.

can be more evident than that every one of them was intended to exclude the Gnostics, except perhaps, that which speaks of Christ as *born of a virgin*. But even this might not be intended to describe the *birth* of Christ in such a manner as to exclude those who thought it natural, so much as to assert that he was really and properly *born*, in opposition to those Gnostics who said that he was not properly born, as he took nothing from his mother. As we learn from Origen that there were even in the Gentile church some persons who did not believe the miraculous conception, and as this is only a gloss upon the creed given by Irenæus, who did believe it, and thought it to be of considerable importance, we cannot be sure that this article in its present form, was in the creed as it was made use of in his time. At most, this article could only be intended to exclude from christian communion those unitarians who disbelieved the miraculous conception, and by no means those who *did* believe it, which is the case of almost all the unitarians of the present age.

Indeed

Indeed the fact, which is universally acknowledged, viz. that great numbers of unitarians were in communion with the catholic church, before and after the time of Irenæus, sufficiently proves that the proper creed, to which all christians gave their consent, did not contain any articles that must (if they had any operation or effect) have excluded them. The learned Dr. Grabe supposes that the article concerning the miraculous conception, was not in the early baptismal creeds, but was reserved for a head of instruction after baptism\*.

All the other articles above mentioned are acknowledged by the learned writer of the *History of the Apostles Creed*, to be directed against the Gnostics, who did not believe that the maker of heaven and earth was the Father of Jesus Christ, that Jesus was the Christ, that he was ever properly born, or suffered, and who did not believe in a resurrection, or future judgment. If it be thought that any of these articles, or any clause in them, was not originally in-

\* Annotata in Bulli Judicium, cap. 6: Bulli Opera, P. 339.



tended to exclude the Gnostics, at least it cannot be said that they were intended to exclude any other set of men, but to express such facts, or principles, as were believed by all christians.

Dr. Sykes observes, that since these two creeds of Irenæus “do not agree in words, “nor consist of the same articles, but differ “in many instances, they cannot be looked “upon as creeds of any church, but as “summaries of the doctrines of christianity “drawn up in this author’s own form\*.” However, though they certainly, for these reasons, are not creeds in words, and form, they are evidently the writer’s gloss, or comment on some actual creed, and allude to the particular articles of one.

The next copies of the creed, or at least something like it, we find in the writings of Tertullian; who gives us *three* of them, all very different from each other, and from those of Irenæus; two of them evidently diffuse glosses, and more likely to be so, as they are introduced into treatises against

\* Enquiry when the resurrection of the body was inserted in the public creeds, p. 11.

particular heresies ; the other more simple, and being inserted in a treatise relating to practice, is more likely to approach nearer to the real creed proposed to the catechumens in his time. It is as follows. “ The  
 “ rule of faith is only one, admitting of no  
 “ change or emendation, requiring us to be-  
 “ lieve in one God Almighty, the maker of  
 “ the world ; and in his Son Jesus Christ,  
 “ born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under  
 “ Pontius Pilate, raised from the dead on the  
 “ third day, received up into heaven, now  
 “ sitting at the right hand of the Father,  
 “ and who will come again to judge both  
 “ the living and the dead, even by the re-  
 “ surrection of the flesh. This law of  
 “ faith remaining, other things, being mat-  
 “ ters of discipline and conduct, admit of  
 “ new corrections, the grace of God co-  
 “ operating\*.”

\* Regula quidem fidei una omnino est, sola, immobilis, et irreformabilis, credendi scilicet in unicum deum, omnipotentem, mundi conditorem, et filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum ex Virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum a mortuis, receptum in cælis sedentem nunc ad dextram patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, per carnis etiam resurrectionem. Hac lege  
 fidei

This creed contains no articles that are not contained in the creed of Irenæus, except the more distinct mention of the resurrection of the flesh, which it is well known all the Gnostics denied; so that there can be no doubt of its having been directed against them.

The second creed of Tertullian occurs in his treatise *De Præscriptione*, in which he combats the Gnostic doctrine; and therefore he enlarges upon the several articles, with a view to make it more evidently levelled against them. “The rule  
 “of faith is that by which we are taught  
 “to believe that there is but one God,  
 “and this no other than the maker of the  
 “world, who produced every thing out of  
 “nothing, by his own word,” then first  
 “sent down; that that word was called  
 “his Son, that he appeared variously in  
 “the name (i. e. in the character) of God  
 “to the patriarchs, that he was afterwards

fidei manente, cætera jam disciplinæ et conversationis, admittunt novitatem correctionis, operante scilicet et proficiente usque ad finem gratia dei. *De Virginibus velandis*, sect. I. p. 173.

“conveyed

“ conveyed by the Spirit, and power of  
 “ God the Father, into the Virgin Mary ;  
 “ that he was made flesh in her womb, and  
 “ from her appeared in the person of Jesus  
 “ Christ ; that he thence preached a new  
 “ law, and a new promise of the kingdom  
 “ of heaven ; that he performed miracles,  
 “ was fixed to the cross, rose again on the  
 “ third day, was taken up into heaven, sat  
 “ at the right hand of the Father, sent the  
 “ power of the Holy Spirit in his place to  
 “ inspire believers ; that he will come with  
 “ glory to take the saints to inherit eternal  
 “ life, and the celestial promises, and to  
 “ judge the wicked to everlasting fire, be-  
 “ ing raised again in their flesh\*.” Admit-

\* Regula est autem fidei, ut jam hinc quid defendamus  
 profiteamur, illa scilicet qua creditur unum omnino Deum  
 esse; nec alium præter mundi conditorem; qui univer-  
 sa de nihilo produxerit, per verbum suum primo omnium  
 demissum: Id verbum filium ejus appellatum, in nomine  
 Dei varie visum a patriarchis, in prophetis semper audi-  
 tum, postremo delatum ex spiritu patris, Dei et virtute, in  
 Virginem Mariam, carnem factum in utero ejus, et ex ea na-  
 tum egisse [exisse] Jesum Christum: exinde prædicasse novam  
 legem, et novam promissionem regni cælorum: virtutes  
 fecisse: fixum cruce; tertia die resurrexisse: in cælos  
 ereptum sedisse ad dexteram Patris: misisse vicariam vim  
 spiritus

ting this to have been the genuine creed, every article in it is still more evidently pointed at the Gnostics.

The third copy of the creed, or rather a another gloss upon it, is found in Tertulian's Treatise against Praxeas; and being a gloss, the object of it is evidently to make it express more clearly his own doctrine of the personification of the logos, which Praxeas denied. It is as follows; " We  
 " believe in one God, but under that dis-  
 " pensation which we call the œconomy;  
 " so that there is also a Son of this one  
 " God, his word, who proceeded from  
 " him, by whom all things were made,  
 " and without whom nothing was made  
 " that was made; that he was sent by the  
 " Father into a virgin, and of her born man  
 " and God, the son of man, and the son of  
 " God, and called Jesus Christ; that he  
 " suffered, died, and was buried, according

*spiritus sancti, qui credentes agat: venturum cum claritate, ad sumendos sanctos in vitæ æternæ et promissorum cœlestium fructum, et ad profanos adjudicandos igni perpetuo, facta utriusque partis resurrectione cum carnis restitutione. Sect. 13. p. 206.*

" to

“ to the scriptures ; that he was raised by  
 “ the Father, and taken up into heaven,  
 “ that he sits at the right hand of the Fa-  
 “ ther, and that he will come to judge the  
 “ living and the dead ; who thence, ac-  
 “ cording to his promise, sent from the  
 “ Father the Holy Spirit, the comforter,  
 “ and the sanctifier of the faith of those  
 “ who believe in the Father, the Son, and  
 “ the Holy Spirit \*.”

Of the other articles which were added to the creed afterwards, an account may be seen in the learned *History of the creed* mentioned above, and it is very apparent that

\* Unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione quam œconomiam dicimus, ut unicus dei sit et filius sermo ipsius, qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt, et sine quo factum est nihil ; hunc missum a patre in virginem, et ex ea natum hominem et deum, filium hominis et filium dei, et cognominatum Jesum Christum. Hunc passum, hunc mortuum, et sepultum, secundum scripturas, et resuscitatum a patre, et in cœlos resumptum, sedere ad dextram patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, qui exinde miserit, secundum promissionem suam, a patre spiritum sanctum, paracletum, sanctificatorem fidei eorum qui credunt in patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum. Hanc regulam ab initio evangelii decurrisset, &c. Ad. Praxeam, sect. 2. p. 501.

they

they were all levelled at particular heresies; but all the original articles of the creed were calculated to exclude the Gnostics, and not one of them can be said to affect the unitarians, especially if they believed the miraculous conception, as I may have occasion to observe more particularly hereafter. At present I produce these creeds with a view to shew how soon the christian church took the alarm at the principles of the Gnostics, and how careful they were to take all the methods in their power to keep them out of the church.

It appears from Cyril of Jerusalem, that the use that was made of the creed was to interrogate each of the candidates for baptism, whether they believed the several articles of it\*.

I shall conclude this account of the creed with observing that, in the Apostolical Constitutions, which were probably written in the fourth century, we have a very short

\* Μέλα ταύτα ἐπι τῆν ἁγίαν τε θεῖα βαπτισμῶς ἐχειροτονοῦσθε πολυμεθῆραν, ὡς ὁ χριστὸς ἀπὸ τῆ σαύρα ἐπὶ τὸ προκειμενὸν μῆμα. καὶ ἠρώτα ἑκάστος εἰ πιστεύει εἰς τὸ σῶμα τῆ παρῶς, καὶ τὴ υἱῆ, καὶ τὴ ἁγίη Πνευμάτιος. Cat. Myst. 2. p. 285.

and

and simple creed proposed. For it is there said, that “ the faith of christians is to believe that there is one Almighty God, and no other, and that he alone is to be worshipped by Jesus Christ, in the holy spirit \*.”

In the times in which the doctrine of the trinity was much agitated, the articles of the apostles creed were not thought to be sufficient ; and some of the more zealous bishops proposed the Nicene creed, and other tests to those who were in communion with them. Theodoret made his catechumens recite the Nicene creed at baptism †. Epiphanius also proposed a large creed to be used at baptism, in opposition to heretics ‡. But this practice does

\* Θεον παντοκρατορα ενα μονον υπαρχειν, παρ ου αλλου εκ εστι κη ουλον μονον σεβειν κη προσκυνειν, δια Ιησου χριστου τε κυριου ημων, εν τω παναγιω πνευματι. *Constitut. Apost. lib. 6. p. 343.*

† Τες γαρ καθ εκαστον ελος τω παναγιω προσιουλας βαπτισματι, την εκλεθεισαν εν Νικαια παρα των αγιων κη μακαριων πατερων πιστην εκμαρτασθαι παρασκευαζομεν. κη μυσαγωγησιν αυτας ως προσελαχθημεν, βαπτιζομεν εις το ονομα τε Πατρος, κη τε Υιου, κη τε αγιου Πνευματος, ενικως εκαστην προσηγοριαν προσφερουτες. *Epist. 145. Opera, vol. 3. p. 1023.*

‡ Ancoratus, sect. 121. *Opera, vol. 2. p. 123.*



not appear to have been general. A copy of the apostles creed, much enlarged, with a kind of comment, may be seen in the works of Cyril of Alexandria\*.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Of the Doctrine of Plato concerning God, and the general System of Nature.*

**I**T will be seen, that what was called *orthodox christianity* after the council of Nice had received a considerable tinge from the tenets of Gnosticism, of which a view has been given in the last section. But the proper source of it was the philosophy of Plato.

The doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, or the *divine intellect*, consisting of the attributes of *wisdom, power, &c.* was certainly introduced by the Platonists, and

\* Opera, vol. 2. p. 699.

from

from them it was adopted by the christian Fathers ; but it appears to me, from a pretty careful examination of the writings of Plato, that this was not done by himself, though the confusion of his ideas gave occasion to it, or something like it, in his followers.

According to Plato, the universe was made by the supreme God, whom he often styles *αγαθόν*, or *the good*, without the instrumentality of any subordinate being whatever, only making it according to a *pattern* previously formed in his own mind. Language to this effect is frequent in his writings ; but there is a manifest confusion in his account of the *ideas of the divine mind*, by means of which the plan of the universe was formed ; so that he sometimes makes them to be a *second principle* of things, and the world itself, which was produced from those ideas, a *third principle*. But I do not find that he ever proceeded so far as to make the divine mind, *υἱς*, or *λογόν*, a *second God*, a distinct intelligent being.

The *Demiurgus*, or immediate maker of the world, according to the following pas-

sage, was evidently the supreme Being himself, and not any subordinate agent, or principle, whatever. “You will say,” says he, “that all animals that are produced, and perishable, and which formerly were not, either have their origin from some God, who made them, or according to the opinion of the vulgar. What opinion? That nature produced them as a self-moving cause, without (*διανοια*) intelligence; or with a divine knowledge, and reason (*λογος*) which comes from God\*.”

I have not met with any passage more favourable to the doctrine of a *second God*, employed in making the world, in all the writings of Plato, than this; and yet it is evident that the *logos* here spoken of, as that by which God made the universe, was, in his idea, synonymous with *διανοια* and *επιστημη*, or his *understanding*, and by no means any other proper *person* or *agent*.

\* Ξενος. Ζωα δὴ παντα θνητα καὶ φυλα— μων αλλη τα η θεα δημιουργον φησομεν υτερον γιγενεσθαι, προτερον εκ οια η τω των πολλων δογματι καὶ ρηματι χρωμεν οι; Θεατη. Πωω. Ξενος. Τα την φυσιν αυλα γενναν, απο τιν αυλας αυλοματης, κα ανευ διανοιης φυσσης, η μελα λογα τε, κα επιστημης θειας, απο θεα γιγνομενης. Sophistes, p. 114.

That

That, in Plato's idea, it was the supreme Being who himself accomplished the work of creation, is evident from his representation of him as rejoicing at the conclusion of it. "When he saw the system in motion, and considered the beautiful image of the eternal gods, the generating Father rejoiced, and was glad, and thought to make it more to resemble the pattern\*." The resemblance between this passage and that of Moses, Gen. i. 31. *And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*, is very striking; so that it is no wonder that many persons should have thought that Plato had seen the writings of Moses, and copied from them. But I think that if Plato had taken *this* from Moses, he would have taken more; and in other respects the theology of Plato is very different indeed from that of Moses, though they both agree in representing the supreme Being himself as having made all

\* Ως τε κινήσεν τε αἴθερ καὶ ζῶν ἐνενοήσεν, τῶν αἰθίων θεῶν γενομένων ἀγάλμα, ὁ γενήσας παῖτηρ ηἰσάθη τε, καὶ εὐφραδεις ἐβίδη μάλλον ὁμοίον πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα ἐπένευσεν ἀπεργασέσθαι. *Timæus*, p. 480.

things by his own power, and to have pronounced them very good.

That the supreme Being himself is the *Demiurgus* according to Plato, and not any subordinate being, is also evident from this passage: “ Nothing can be produced without a cause, for when the *Demiurgus* looks to what is always the same” (meaning the images of things always existing in his mind) “ and making use of this as a pattern, produces into act his idea and power, every thing must necessarily be finished in the most perfect manner \*.”

Plato never distinguishes the *Demiurgus* from the creator of the world, as his followers and the christian Fathers were careful to do; and with respect to all the *immortal beings*, Plato introduces the supreme Being as solemnly addressing them, and calling himself their *Demiurgus*, “ Gods of Gods, of whom I am the maker, and the

\* Πάν γὰρ τι ἀδύνατον χωρὶς αἰτίας γενέσθαι σchein. Ὅταν μὲν ἐν ὁδημουργῶ, πρὸς τὸ καλὰ ταῦτα ἔχον βλέπων, αἰ τοῖσιν τῶν προχρωμένῶν παραδειγμασί, τὴν ἰδέαν καὶ δύναμιν ἀπεργαζέσθαι, καλὸν ἐξ ἀναγκῆς εἶως ἀποτέλεισθαι πάν. Timæus, p. 477.

“ Father

“ Father of the works, which are made by  
“ myself\*,” &c.

Much has been said concerning the *Platonic Logos*; but if by this be meant a person distinct from the being whose *logos* it is, we must not look for it in the writings of Plato himself, but in those of his followers. According to Plato, *logos* has only two acceptations, viz. those of *speech*, and of *reason*, such as is found in man. Having spoken of one *logos* as infirm, and standing in need of assistance, he says, “ there is  
“ another *logos*, the natural brother of this,  
“ much better, and more powerful, viz.  
“ that which is written with knowledge in  
“ the mind of the learner, able to help  
“ itself, knowing with whom to speak, and  
“ with whom to be silent. *Pbæd.* You  
“ mean the living and animated *logos* of an  
“ intelligent person, of which that which is  
“ written may be justly called the image †.”

\* Θεοὶ θεῶν, ὧν ἐγὼ δημιοργῶ, πατὴρ τε ἐργῶν, αἱ δὲ ἔμμε γενομένα.  
Timæus, p. 481.

† Σω. Τί δε ἄλλον οὖραμεν λόγου τείε ἀδελφον γητισιον τῷ τρωπι  
γινῆσαι, καὶ οὐσα ἀμεινων καὶ δυνατώτερον τείε φύσαι——Ος μεί επι-

This is evidently a description (though a very poor one) of *reason*, as a faculty of the mind, and by no means that of a person.

Plato makes the same distinction in his *Theætetus*. After defining one *logos* to mean *speech*, he says of another, “ They who think rightly are said to think *with* *logos*, and there can be no right opinion without knowledge †.” In this passage he is describing a property of the mind of *man*, but there can be no doubt of his having the same idea of the constitution of the divine mind, as he no where supposes that there is, in this respect, any difference between them, which the christian Fathers very particularly point out. For, according to them, the divine *logos* became a permanent principle, or person, which the human *logos* could not be.

σημης γραφείαι εν τη τε μανθανούσῃ ψυχῇ, δυναίῃ μιν αμικτα  
εαυτῶ, επιστημῶν τε λεγειν τε ἢ σιγαῖν προς ες δεῖ. Φαι. Τον τε  
εἰδοίῃ λόγον λεγεις ζῶντα και ἐμψυχον. Phædrus, p. 213.

† Οσοι τι ορθον δεξιῶσι παντως αὐτο φανένται μὲν λόγῳ εχόντες,  
και εἰσὸς ἐτι ορθη δεξα χωρις επιστημης γενήσεται. Theætétus,  
p. 94.

The

The term *νῦς* is another denomination of the *logos*, signifying the *intelligence* or *wisdom* of God ; but I find no personification of this principle in Plato. One of his definitions of it is the following, “ *Νῦς* is either the same thing with truth, or exceedingly like to it\*.” This is far from being an accurate definition ; but there is by no means any *personification* in it, and Plato makes no difference between the mind of man, and that of God in this respect.

The things to which there is the greatest appearance of Plato giving a permanent existence, as *original principles of things*, are the *ideas in the divine mind*, from which was formed the *exemplar*, or *pattern* of the visible world. But if all that he has advanced on this subject (with respect to which his own ideas were far from being clear) be attended to, it will be perceived, that by *ideas* he meant what we may call, *the elements*, or rather *the objects, of real knowledge*, of which the minds of philosophers, as well as the divine mind, were possessed. But by

\* Νῦς δὲ ἢ τοῦ ταύτου καὶ ἀληθείας ἐστὶν ἢ πάντων ὁμοιωμάτων καὶ ἀληθεύων. Philebus, p. 175.



*ideas* he did not mean what we now do by that term, viz. the image left in the mind by the impresson of external objects.

“ If *understanding*, and *right opinion*,” he says, “ be two species of things, there must “ be things that are not perceived by our “ senses, but by the understanding only\*.” Then, asserting that *understanding* and *right opinion* are two species of things, he says, that “ of one of these (meaning *right opinion*) all men are capable; but of the “ former, viz. *res*, or *understanding*, only the “ gods, and a few men are capable.” Admitting this distinction, he says, “ it will “ follow that there must be a species of “ things” (meaning no doubt, his *ideas*) “ not subject to generation or destruction, “ receiving nothing from without, nor ever “ leaving their seat to go to any thing that “ is without, and which the understanding “ alone can look into †.”

\* Εἰ μὲν νῆς κ' ὁδοῖα ἀληθείης ἐστὶν δύο γένη, πάντῃ παύσασιν εἶναι καθάπερ  
τα καὶ αὐτὰ ἀναιδεήτα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, εἶδη, νοημένα μόνον. Timæus, p. 485.

† Καὶ τὰ μὲν πάντα ἀνδρῶν μελεχθῆναι φαίεον, τὰ δὲ θεῶν, ἀνδρωπιῶν  
δὲ γένῃ, βραχυ τι. Τέτων δὲ εἶω ἐχούτων, ὁμολογήσειον μὲν εἶναι το  
καὶ αὐτὰ ἐχόντων εἶδη, ἀγενήτων καὶ ἀσυνλεθρῶν ἢ δὲ εἰς ἑαυτὸ εἰς δεχο-  
μενων

Aristotle, in his animadversions on the ideas of Plato, gives the same account of the origin of this hypothesis, but he explains it more intelligibly. “The doctrine of ideas,” he says, “was advanced by those who were convinced by the reasoning of Heraclitus, that all sensible things are always flowing” (or changing) “so that if there be any such thing as real knowledge” (which was supposed to require a fixed object) “there must be things of a different nature from those that are the objects of our senses. They must be fixed, for there can be no proper knowledge of things that are flowing\*.”

Such were the wretched metaphysics, undeserving of any confutation at this day, on which this sublime doctrine of ideas was founded.

μενον αλλο αλλοθεν, εἴε αὐτο εἰς αλλοποιοιον, αορατον τε και αλλως αγασθητον εἶο, ο δη νοησις εἰληχει επισκοπειν. Timæus, p. 485.

\* Συνεβη δε περι των ειδων δοξα τοις ειπασιν. δια το πειθηναι περι της αληθειας τοις Ηρακλειτιοις λογοις, ως παντων αιδηλων αι ρεωντων, ως τε ειπερ επιστημη τινος εστιν η φρονησις, ελερας τινας δειν φυσεις ειναι παρα τας αιδηλας, μενσασ· ε γαρ ειναι των ρεωντων επιστημην. Metaphysica, lib. 12. cap. 4. Opera, vol. 2. p. 749.

To

To this *system of ideas*, existing in the divine mind, Plato elsewhere gives the name of the *invisible and intelligible world*; and he is here contrasting it with *the visible world*, of which it was the *type*, or pattern; saying, “there is a second, similar to this;” “and bearing the same name” (viz. that of *world* κόσμος, which means the whole visible system, and not this earth in particular) “that is perceived by the senses, generated;” “always in motion, in some place, subject” “also to destruction, and apprehended by” “*opinion* \*” (which he makes to be a different thing from *understanding*) “and the” “*senses*.” Then, after having spoken of these two principles, the visible and invisible worlds, he speaks of a *third thing*, “which affords place for every thing, and” “is not subject to corruption; a thing that” “is to be conceived without being felt, and not easily to be understood †.” By

\* Το δε ομωνυμιον, ομοιον τε εκειτω, δευτερον αισθητον, γενητον, πεφορημενον, αιει, γιγνομενον εν τινι τοπω, η παλιν εκειθεν απολλυμενον, δοξη μετ αισθησεως περιληπτον. Ibid.

† Τριτον δε αυ γενε, ον το γαρ χωρας αιει φθορας η προσδεχομενον, εδραν δε παρεχον οσα εχει γενεσιν πασιν, αυλο δε μετ αναισθησεως απλην λογισμω τινι ισθω μογισ πιστον. Timæus, p. 485.

this he can mean nothing but either *space*, or, if his meaning may be explained by Timæus Locrus, his master, or Proclus his commentator, *primeval matter*, from which all things were made.

The latter, explaining this passage in the writings of Plato, says, that “ he calls the “ *το ον* the father, and matter the mother “ and nurse of the creation\*.

Plato distinguishes these three things more distinctly in the following manner: “ There “ are three things to be distinguished; the “ thing produced, that in which it is pro- “ duced, and that from which it was pro- “ duced, and from which it took its like- “ nefs. To use a comparifon, we may call “ that which receives the *mother*, that from “ which it was derived the *father*, and the “ *offspring* between them is nature †.”

If there be a proper *Platonic trinity* (and all the ancients seem to have been fond

\* Και γαρ εκεί το μεν ον πατέρα, την δε υλην μητέρα, κ' τιδηνη επουμαζει της γενεσεως. In Platonem, lib. i. cap. 20. p. 69.

† Εν δε εν τω παροντι χρη γενη διανοηθηται τριτλα, το μεν γιγνομενον, το δε εν ω γιγνεται, το δε οθεν αφομοιωμενον, φησαι το γιγνομενον. Και δε κ' προσεικασαι ωρεπει, το μεν δεχομενον μητρι, το δε οθεν πατρι, την δε μελαξυ τειλων φυσικω εγγονω νοησαι τε. Ibid.

of the number *three*) the three things, or principles above-mentioned, seem to be more distinctly marked than any other *ternary* in the writings of Plato, viz. the divine intellect, or system of ideas, here called the father, the visible world the child, and *matter* the mother. But this is far from being a trinity of persons in the Divine Being. Primeval matter he afterwards characterizes in a more diffuse and figurative manner, saying, that “it is the receptacle of the universe, “neither earth, nor fire, nor water, nor any “thing made out of them, or of which “they are made, but containing all things; “which is, in an inexplicable manner, capable of an intelligible nature, not to be “comprehended by itself\*.”

There are two passages in the works of Plato from which Cyril of Alexandria † pretends to prove that “the Greeks extended the divine nature to three hy-

\* Διὸς τὴν τὰ γεγονόσις οὐραία, καὶ πάντως αἰσθητῆς μητέρα τι υποδοχὴν, μήτε γῆν, μήτε αέρα, μήτε πῦρ, μήτε ὕδωρ λεγόμεν, μήτε οὐσα ἐκ τῶν. μήτε ἐξ ὧν ταῦτα γέγονεν. ἀλλ' ἀσφαλὴν εἶδος τι, καὶ ἀμορφον, πάνδεχες· μεταλαμβάνων δὲ ἀπορωσία πῶς τὰ γίγνεται, καὶ δυσάλαττοτατον αὐτοῦ λεγόντες, ἢ ψευσομεθα. Timæus, p. 485.

† Con. Jul. lib. 8. Juliani, Opera, vol. 2, p. 271.

“postates,

“ postafes, and that God had a logos.” The first is from the *Epinomis*; but this appears to me to be little to his purpose. For, in that place, Plato, having spoken of the heavenly bodies performing their revolutions about this visible world, says, “ which the “ most divine logos has established \*.” This is nothing more than if he had said, the *divine power*, or the *divine being* himself, made the world.

The other passage is a very obscure one, at the close of the epistle to Hermias, Erasmus, and Coriscus, in which mention is made of “ God the governor of all things,” and also of his Father; but as no explanation is added, his meaning is not easily discovered. Writing to the three persons above-mentioned, and expressing his wish that their friendship might remain unalterable, he advises them, among other methods, to take a joint oath, “ by God the “ governor of all things that are, and that “ are to come, and the Lord the Father of

\* Κοσμον ον ελαξε λογος ο παντων θεοκρατον. Opera, p. 702.

“ the

“ the governor, and of the cause, whom, if  
 “ we truly philosophize, we shall all know,  
 “ as far as happy men can attain to\*.

If the construction of the Greek be attended to, we shall see that such a distinction is not made between the *governor* and the *Father* as we should have expected, if they had been distinct persons. It will be seen that a person being *his own father* occurs in the writings of the later Platonists, and the conclusion of this passage speaks of no more than one person.

But though Plato himself did not proceed so far as to personify the ideas, or any thing else belonging to the divine mind, it may easily be conceived how this might come to be done by his followers, especially from their calling these *ideas*, the *causes*, as well as *principles* of things. Diogenes Laertius, in his life of Plato, says, that he made the terms *idea*, *form*, *kind*, *pattern*, *principle*, and *cause* (as, I think, his words

\* Επομνησίας — ἐξ τῶν παλίων θεῶν ἡγεμόνα τῶν τε οὐρανῶν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων, τὰ τε ἡγεμόνος καὶ αἰτίας πατέρα, κυρίον, επομνησίας, οἷον, ὡς ὅτις φιλοσοφῶμεν, εἰσόμεν πατέρες σαφῶς, εἰς δύναμιν ἀνθρώπων εὐδαιμονῆν.

are most naturally rendered into English) to be synonymous \*. “ Ideas, he supposed to “ be *causes*, and *principles*, of things being “ naturally what they are †.” It also appears from Aristotle, that *ideas* were usually called the *causes of things*; and the notion of a *cause*, and that of a proper *author* or *person*, are nearly allied. It being a favourite principle with the ancients, that the divine mind was immoveable, and therefore could not *go forth* to the work of creation, but that something else must do this; this second principle seems to have been personified for this purpose. But this was not done by Plato; for he made ideas to be as immoveable as the divine mind itself. In the affected mysterious way of expressing himself, which he frequently adopted, he says, that “ *idea*” (for he sometimes used this term in the singular, and sometimes in the plural number) “ neither moves nor remains;”

\* Την γε ουν ιδεαν, κ' ειδος ονομαζει, κ' γενος, κ' παραδειγμα, κ' αρχην, κ' αιτιον. Vita Platonis, p. 225.

† Τας δε ιδεας υφισταται αιτιας τινας, κ' αρχας, τα τοιαυτ' ειναι τα φησιν συνεστια οικηπερ εστιν αυτα. Ibid. p. 232.

meaning,



meaning, perhaps, that it had no relation to space, and that “ it is both *one* and *many*\*.”

The christian Fathers have called the second principle, or *logos*, the *Son*, and the Supreme Being himself the *Father*; but in the system of Plato, the *sun* has the appellation of *εγγονος*, or the offspring of the Deity; and in one place the whole universe is called his *only begotten Son*. “ The Sun,” he says †, “ he created analogous to himself; for he “ himself in the intellectual world bears “ the same relation to the mind, and the “ things perceived by the mind, that the “ sun in the visible world bears to the eye, “ and the objects perceived by the eye.”

His explanation of this analogy discovers much confusion in his ideas on the subject. “ As the sun,” he says, “ gives the eye a “ power of seeing, and the objects a power “ of being seen; so that which gives truth

\* Και την ιδεαν, ουτε κινουμενον, ουτε μενον· κ' ταυτο, κ' εν, κ' πολλα. Ibid. p. 25.

† Τούτων τοιούτων, ην δ' εγω, φασιναι με λεγειν τον τε αγαθον ενγονον, ον τ' αγαθον εγεννησεν αναλογον εαυτω, ο. τιπερ αυτο εν τω νοητω τοπω προς τε νυν κ' τα νοημενα, ουτως ουτων εν τω ορατω προς τε ολην κ' τα οραμενα. Dc Rep. lib. vi. p. 433.

“ to

“ to things that are known, and power” (that is, of knowing) “ to him that knows, “ is the idea of the good” (or of God) “ being the cause of knowledge and of truth, “ as perceived by the mind\*.”

Plotinus has the same idea, viz. that *the good* is both the cause of *being*, and of its *appearing to be*; just as the sun is both the cause of sensible things, and also of their being perceived by the senses, though itself be neither light nor sensible things †.

Plato also says, that “ as light and vision “ resemble the sun, but are not the sun, so “ knowledge and truth resemble the good, “ but are not the good; the good itself “ being something more venerable ‡.” Here it is observable, that he makes *the good*, and

\* Γούλο τοιουν το την αληθειαν παρεχεν τοις γιγνωσκομενοις, η̄ το γιγνωσκουλι την δυναμιν αποδιδον, την τε αγαθη ιδεαν φασι ειναι, αιλιον δ' επιστημης εσαν η̄ αληθειας, ως γιγνωσκομετης μεν δια νε. De Rep. lib. vi. p. 433.

† Δια τελο ε μονον λεγεται της κσιας αλλα η̄ τε ορασθαι αυτην αιλιος εκεινος ειναι. ωσπερ δε ο ηλιος τε ορασθαι τοις αιδηλοις η̄ τε γενεσθαι αιλιων. αιλιος πως η̄ της σφειωσ εστιν, κκεν ειε ολις ειε τᾱ γινομενα. ελω η̄ η̄ τε αγαθη φυσικ αιλια κσιας η̄ νε. En. 6. lib. 7. cap. 16. p. 709.

‡ Ωσπερ εκει φως τε η̄ οφιν ηλιοειδη μεν νομιζειν ορθον, ηλιοειδε δε ηγεισθαι εκ ορθωσ εκει: ελω η̄ ενλαυδα αγαθηειδη μεν νομιζειν ταυτ

*the idea of the good* to be synonymous. This, I hope, may serve as a specimen of the metaphysical *acumen* of Plato, and indeed of the ancients in general.

This comparison of the divine Being, and his influence in the moral world, to the sun and his rays in the natural world, which Plato did not pursue to any great length, being taken up and carried on by Philo, and the christian Fathers, contributed greatly to the formation of the doctrine of the christian trinity. According to the philosophy of the ancients, *rays of light* were something emitted by the sun, but still belonging to him, and never properly separated from him; but after being emitted in the day, were drawn into their source at night. As by these rays objects become visible, so that they serve as a medium of communication between the eye and the visible object, in like manner Plato must have supposed that the medium by which the mind distinguishes intellectual objects was a *divine influence*, or something emitted from the Deity, and

αμφότερα ὁρᾷ, ἀγνοῦν δὲ γινώσκειν σπουδαιότερον αὐτῶν ἢ ὁρᾷν. ἀλλ' εἰς  
 τὴν αὐτὴν τὴν ἀγαθὴν εἶναι. De Rep. lib. 6. p. 433.

drawn

drawn into him again at pleasure; and by making the *mind*, or *understanding*, to be one thing, and the soul itself another, he gave a further handle for the hypothesis of a divine efflux different from the divine Being himself. This *νῦς*, therefore, synonymous to *logos*, was afterwards supposed to be that principle which was occasionally emitted from the divine Being whenever any thing external to him was to be produced, himself being supposed to be immoveable.

The christian doctrine of the trinity was, moreover, brought forward by another maxim, which I do not find in Plato himself, but which was understood to be his doctrine, since it appears in the works of Julian, who was a great admirer of Plato. It is that, with respect to the Deity, there is no difference between *powers*, or *properties*, and *essence*. “Whatever,” he says\*, “has been said concerning the divine essence,

\* Κοινῶς μὲν διὰ τὰ πρόσθεν ἐν ρηθέντι περὶ τῆς ἰσῆος αὐτῆς, ταῖς δυναμῶσιν προσσημῆν ὑποληπτεόν. ἔ γὰρ ἄλλο μὲν ἐστὶν ἰσὶα θεῶν, δυναμὶς δὲ ἄλλο· καὶ νῦν Δία, τρίτον παρὰ ταῦτα ἐνεργεῖα. πάντα γὰρ ὡπερ βασιλεὺς, ταῦτα ἐστὶ, καὶ δυναταὶ, καὶ ἐνεργεῖ. Juliani Op. tom. i. Orat. iv. p. 142.

“ must be understood of his powers ; for  
 “ the *essence* of God is not one thing, and  
 “ his *power* another, nor indeed is his *energy*  
 “ a third. . For whatever he *wills*, that is,  
 “ and also *has power*, and *energy*.” Again,  
 he says \*, “ When we would explain the  
 “ *essence* of God, we must be understood to  
 “ say the same concerning his *power* and  
 “ *energy*, for they are synonymous. For  
 “ whatever we say concerning his *power* and  
 “ *energy*, they are not to be considered as  
 “ *works*, but as *essence*.”

Plato, therefore, having spoken of *νῆς*, or *logos*, as a thing distinct from the Divine Being himself, as a *power*, or *property*, belonging to him, and all divine powers and properties being *substance*, a *substantial person* was easily made of this divine power. So miserably have men bewildered themselves for want of proper distinctions, and a true use of words. Such metaphysics as these of

\* Πρῶτον γὰρ ὅσα περὶ ἐφάμεν. τὴν ἕσταν αὐτῆ παραστήσει βουλομένοι, ταῦθ' ἡμῖν εἰρησάδει, καὶ περὶ τῶν δυνάμεων καὶ ἐνεργειῶν κωμῆσον, ἐπει δὲ ἐν τοῖς τοιαῖοις ὁ λόγος εἰσὶν ἀντιστρέφειν. ὅσα καὶ περὶ τῶν δυνάμεων αὐτῆ καὶ ἐνεργειῶν ἐφεξῆς σκοπούμεν, ταῦτα οὐκ ἐργα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ κωμῆσον. Ibid. 143.

the ancients, excite a smile of contempt in us, who have been better instructed by the happier sagacity of Locke, and others of the moderns. We think it wretched trifling; but, alas, *hæ nugæ seria ducunt*. Hence arose the doctrine of the trinity; and from this doctrine infinite confusion in the christian system.

As the *world*, meaning the *universe*, or the *soul of the world*, is commonly reckoned the *third principle* in the Platonic trinity, I shall consider what Plato's own ideas of it were; that it may be seen whether it has any correspondence to the *holy spirit*, the third principle in the christian trinity. According to Plato, the world was made by God, out of pre-existent matter, and as, according to his general system, every *body* has a *soul*, the universe was also provided with one. But as the visible body of the universe was modified by the supreme Being, it should seem that the soul of the universe did likewise receive some modification from him; but with respect to this circumstance, he has not been sufficiently explicit. The universe, however, when completed, was

by Plato styled *a God, and the only begotten Son* of the supreme God.

Having spoken of God as essentially “good, and the parent of nothing but what was good and excellent; and as nothing could be excellent without intelligence, nor intelligent without a soul; for this reason,” he says, “he gave a mind to the soul, and a soul to the body, and so constituted the whole world after these, the most perfect and excellent in nature. So that we may justly say, that the world is, through the providence of God, a living creature, that it has a soul, and reason\*.” “That this living creature might be like the most perfect living creature, he did not make two, or more of them; but this *one only begotten heaven*” (meaning, probably, the whole system, in-

\* Θειμς δε οὐκ ἦν, εἴ ἐστὶ τῷ ἀριστῷ ὄραν ἀλλο πλὴν τοῦ καλλίστου, λογισαμένου ἔν ευρισκεν, ἐκ τῶν κατὰ φύσιν ὀραίων, ἔδει ἀνοήτων, τὰ κεν ἐχούστων, ὅλον ὅλα καλλίον ἐσεσθαι πρὸς ἔργον. νεν δὲ αὐ χωρὶς ψυχῆς, ἀδιυαίου παραγεγεσθαι τῷ. Δια δὴ τὸν λογισμὸν τούτου, νεν μὲν δὲ ψυχῆς, ψυχῆν δὲ ἐν σώματι συνίστας, τὸ πᾶν ξυνεπεκλειανέλο, ὅπως οὐ καλλίστη εἴη κατὰ τὸ παραδειγμα ἀριστον τε ἔργον ἀπεργασμένος. εἰως ἐν δὴ κατὰ λόγον τοῦ εἰκόλα δεῖ λεγειν, τούτου τὸν κόσμον ζῶον ἐμφύχου ἐγενν τε, τὴ ἀνοήτεια, δια τὴν τε θεῶ γεγεσθαι προνοίαι. Timæus, p. 477.

cluding

cluding the sun, moon, and stars) “ which  
“ has been, is, and will be\*.”

Then, speaking of the constituent parts of the world, earth, air, fire, and water, he says, “ he left nothing out of it, with this view, “ that it might be a whole and perfect living creature, consisting of perfect parts, “ and moreover *one*, there being nothing “ left out of which another could be made, “ and not subject to old age or disease †.” He then speaks of it as made in a perfectly spherical form. But his reasons for this are as little to the purpose as those which I have here given relating to its other properties.

From this it should seem that, according to Plato, the matter out of which the world was made, was not created by God, but found by him, having been from eternity,

\* *Ἴνα ἐν τοῖς κατὰ τὴν μὴ οὐρανὸν ομοίον ἢ τῷ πάντεστι ζωῶν, διὰ ταῦτα εἴτε δύο, εἴ ἀπειρῶς ἐποίησεν ὁ ποιῶν κόσμους. ἀλλ’ εἰς οὐδὲ μὴ οὐρανὸν ἐρα- νος γεγονώς, ἐστὶ τε καὶ ἐσέσται.* Ibid.

† *Τῶν δὲ δὴ τετραρῶν ἐν οὐρανῷ ἑκάστου εἰληφέν ἢ τὴν κόσμῳ συστάσις, ἐκ γὰρ πυρὸς πάντος, ὑδατῶς τε καὶ ἀερος, καὶ γῆς συνεστήσεν αἰὼν ὁ ἐξ- ἰστας. μέρος καὶ ἐν κέντρῳ καὶ δυνάμει ἐξώθεν ἀπολείπων. ταῦτα δὲ διανοήθεισ πρῶτον μὲν ἵνα οὐρανὸν οὐ μάλιστα ζῶν τελέσεν ἐκ τελεῶν τῶν μερῶν εἶη. πρὸς δὲ τῆσιν ἐν, αἵ ἐκ ὑπολειμμένων ἐξ ὧν ἄλλο τὸ καὶ ἂν γενοίτο.* Τι- μάριος, p. 478.



co-existent with himself: but as he elsewhere observes \*, “ in a confused disorderly “ state.” Justin Martyr says, that he supposed matter to have been uncreated †.

According to Athanasius, Plato supposed matter to be self-existent. For he reproaches him with the weakness of his God, as not being able to produce any thing, unless he had matter to work upon; just as a carpenter is unable to make any thing till he be supplied with wood ‡.

Theodoret indeed says, that, according to Plato, God made matter, which was eternal with him §. But in this he must have been mistaken.

\* *Αλακώς, εις ταξιν αυλο ηγαγεν εκ της αλαξιας.* Timæus, p. 477.

† *Δια τολο γαρ κ' αγενησιν την υλην εφησεν ειναι.* Ad Græcos, p. 19.

‡ *Αλλοι δε, εν οις εστι κ' ο μεγας παρ' Ελλησι Πλατων, εκ πρωτοκειμενης κ' αγενησ υλης ποιοιμεναι τον θεον τα ολα διηγονται. μη αν γαρ δυνασθαι τι ποιησαι τον θεον, ει μη προπεκειλο η υλη· ωσπερ κ' τω τεκτονι προποκεισθαι δει το ξυλον, ινα κ' εργασασθαι δυναθη. εκ υλης δε τολο λεγοντες, οτι ασθενειαν περιλιθεασι τω θεω· ει γαρ εκ εστι της υλης αυλος αυλος, αλλ' εξ υποκειμενης υλης ποιοι τα οπλα, ασθενης ευρισκεισθαι, μη δυναμενος ανευ της υλης εργασασθαι τι των γενομενων.* De Incarnatione, Opera, vol. i. p. 54.

§ *Των γαρ αλοπαλαιων, Πλατωνος μεν ανηχεσθαι, κ' αυλον της υλης τον θεον λεγοντος, κ' ξυλαιδιον τς δεξ την υλην αποκαταλιος, κ' τας ιδεας*

The world being made, Plato speaks of a soul being given to it. But as his proof of the heavenly bodies having souls is the regularity of their motions, it is possible that he might consider matter, before it was reduced into order, as having been without a soul; and though he speaks of the soul of the world as having existed before the body, it is possible, that by *body*, he might not mean *mere matter*, but matter reduced into order, and formed into a regular universe, “He,” (viz. God) he says\*, “gave a soul, “which by its origin and power, is prior “to, and older than the body, as its gover- “ness and directrix.” He then proceeds to give an account of the essential parts and principles of this soul of the universe; but I have no occasion to follow him so far.

One reason, however, why it may be doubted whether the soul of the world was

ιδεας εκ τῆ θεῆ καὶ ζῶν τῷ θεῷ φασκόντος εἶναι· τον δὲ τῆ θεῷ λογῶν, καὶ τὸ παναγαθὸν πνεῦμα μὴ πειθεσθῆναι, καὶ εκ τῆ θεῆ φωνῆ, καὶ ζῶν τῷ θεῷ εἶναι. Græcæ Affectiones. Disp. 2. Opera, vol iv. p. 757. Ed. Halæ.

\* Ο δὲ καὶ γενέσκει καὶ ἀρετῆ, προτιεραν καὶ πρεσβυτεραν ψυχῆν σωματος, ὡς δεσποτὶν καὶ ἀρξασαν ἀρξομενῶν συνετησαλο. Timæus, p. 478.

supposed

supposed by Plato to be given it by God, is, that in one passage of his writings, he supposes that there were more of these souls than one. Having defined *soul* to be the *cause of self motion*, in answer to the question, whether there was only *one soul* in the universe, he answers, “ more than one, two at least, one benevolent, and the other of a contrary disposition \*.” Now, according to Plato, nothing evil was made by the Supreme Being himself; and therefore, it should seem that this malevolent soul, or principle, in nature, must have had some other origin; and, perhaps, have been co-existent with matter, though subject to the controul of the supreme and good Being.

It was allowed that there was something *divine* in the souls of men, which Clemens Alexandrinus calls the *ves*, that was in it, which he says the Platonists made to be an emanation from the Deity †. It is probable, therefore, that Plato might suppose the

\* Δυσιν μὲν γέπῃ, εὐατίῳ μὴδὲν τιθώμεν, γὰρ τε εὐεργεῖδ' ἔσθ', καὶ τε ταλαιῶνα δύναμεν ἐξεργασασθαι. De Leg. lib. x. p. 608.

† Οἱ μὲν ἀμφὶ Πλάτωνα νῦν μὲν ἐν ψυχῇ θείας μοίρας ἀπορροῶν ὑπαρχοῦσα· ψυχῆν δὲ ἐν σώματι καίτοιμιζουσιν. Strom. 5. p. 590.

proper ψυχή in the soul of the world to be essential to matter, and that God imparted the *υσις*.

That God is good, and can only be the cause of good, is most expressly asserted by Plato.—“For the evils of life,” he says, “we must seek for some other cause than “God\*.” According to Plato, the Supreme Being himself is not only not the author of evil, but even not of things that are imperfect, and subject to decay and death. However, since it was proper, in order to complete the whole system, that such things should be formed, having himself made the celestial and immortal beings; that is, the heavenly bodies (to each of which he assigns a soul) Plato introduces the Divine Being as solemnly addressing himself to them, and giving them directions for the production of such creatures as he could not make himself (since, then, they would necessarily have been immortal) viz. man and all terrestrial animals. *Timæus*, p. 481.

\* *Των δε κακων, αλλα τα δει ζηλειν τα αιτια, αλλ' ε τον θεον.* De Rep. lib. ii. p. 390;



tinus says, that “matter is absolutely evil, “having no portion of good in it\*.”

Thus I have given the best view that I have been able to collect of every thing that can be supposed to constitute *the trinity of Plato*, from his own writings, without finding in them any resemblance to the christian trinity, or indeed any proper personification of the divine *logos*, which has been made the second person in it.

I have particularly examined what the learned Dr. Cudworth, and others, have advanced on this dark subject, without seeing their conclusions properly supported. To shew on how slight foundations such writers as he (who certainly did not mean to deceive) can advance such things as he does, and how far their imagination and hypothesis can impose upon them, I shall lay before my readers two of his assertions on this subject.

He says †, “In his second epistle to Dionysius, he” (Plato) “does mention a tri-

\* Οπερ εστιν η υλη, τολο το ουλος κακον, μηδεμιαν εχον αγαθε μοιραν.  
En. i. lib. 8. sect. 5. p. 75.

† Intellectual System, lib. i. cap. i. p. 407.

“nity of divine hypostases all together.”—  
 From this, one would expect at least something like the Athanasian doctrine of *three persons in one God*. But all that I can learn from Plato in this epistle is as follows: Sending his letter to a great distance, and apprehensive of the possibility of its not reaching the person to whom it was addressed, he says, that he had written so obscurely, that only Dionysius himself could understand it. “All things are about the king of all, and all things are, for the sake of him, and he is the author of every thing that is fair and good; but the second about the second, and the third about the third. The mind of man may stretch itself to learn what these things are, looking at those which resemble them, of which none do it sufficiently; but with respect to the king, and the things of which I speak, there is nothing like them\*.”

\* Περὶ τῶν κοινῶν βασιλεῖα πάντ' ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐκεῖνος ἕνεκα πάντων, καὶ ἐκεῖνος αἴτιος ἀπαγίων τῶν καλῶν, δεύτερον δὲ περὶ τὰ δεύτερα, καὶ τρίτον περὶ τὰ τρίτα. ἢ ἐν ἀνθρώπινα ψυχῇ, περὶ αἴτια ὀρεγέται, μάθει ποῖα αἴτια ἐστὶ βλέπυσσα εἰς τὰ αὐτῆς συγγεῖνη, ὡς ἂν ἰκανῶς εἴχη. τὰ δὲ βασιλεῶς περὶ, καὶ ὡς εἶπον, ἂν ἐστὶ τοῦτο. Epist. ad Dionysium 2. p. 670.

This

This is Dr. Cudworth's *trinity of divine hypostases*, and it is certainly as obscure as any doctrine of the trinity needs to be. Plato himself, or Dionysius, can alone explain it to us. I imagine, however, that, in this dark manner, he might refer to one or other of the *ternaries* above mentioned, viz. the supreme Being, his ideas, and the visible world, or the supreme Being, the visible world, and primeval matter.

Again, the Doctor says, p. 406. "in  
" other places of his" (Plato's) "writings,  
" he frequently asserts above the self-moving  
" *psyche*, an immoveable and standing *vis*, or  
" intellect, which was properly the *Demiur-*  
" *gus*, or architectonic framer of the whole  
" world." But it has appeared, that ac-  
cording to Plato, the supreme Being him-  
self, whom he styles *the good*, was the *De-*  
*miurgus* with respect to every thing that is  
immortal and perfect, and that not his *vis*,  
but those other created immortal beings,  
were the makers of man, and all other mor-  
tal and imperfect creatures. As to the *many*  
*passages* in the writings of Plato, which he  
says, teach the contrary doctrine, I can only  
say,



say, that I have not found any of them; and that if there be any such, they must be contradicted by what I have already quoted from him.

In a tract that remains of Timæus Locrus, from whom it is acknowledged that Plato borrowed the outlines of his system, we perceive no trace of two intelligent beings, but of one only, which he calls *God*, a being essentially good, who himself formed the world out of pre-existent matter \*. “ God,” he says, “ being good, and “ seeing matter capable of receiving ideas” (meaning, probably, the impressions of ideas) “ and capable of change, but variously and irregularly, was desirous of “ reducing it into order, and to bring it “ from uncertain changes to a fixed state, “ that the differences of bodies might correspond, and not vary at random, made “ the world out of the whole of matter ; “ giving all nature for its boundary, that it “ might comprehend every thing within

† Πῶς ὡς ὠραῖον γενεσθῆαι, λόγῳ ἡσθῆν ἰδέα τε καὶ ἕλα, καὶ ὁ θεὸς δαμνερὸς τῷ βελτιώτερος. De Anima Mundi, in Gale's Opuscula Mythologica, p. 515.

“ itself,

“ itself, and be one, his only begotten,  
 “ a perfect, living, rational, and spherical  
 “ body\*.”

According to Timæus *ideas* and *nous* must have been synonymous, and the same with the divine being himself, or the proper furniture of his mind. For having begun with saying that “ there are two causes of  
 “ all things, viz. *mind* (*nous*) of those  
 “ things that are according to reason, and *ne-*  
 “ *cessity*, of those things that are acted upon  
 “ like body. The former,” he says, “ was  
 “ called God, being the origin of the best  
 “ things †.” He then says, that “ all things  
 “ are *idea*, *matter*, and *sensible things*, their

\* Αγαθος ὢν ὁ θεός, ὁρῶν τε τῶν ὑλῶν δεχομένων τῶν ἰδεῶν καὶ ἀλλοιούμενων, πασιῶς μὲν, αἰακίως δὲ, εἰεῖ εἰς τὰξιν αἰλῶν ἀγεν, καὶ ἐξ ἀορίτων μέλαςβολῶν, ἐς ὠρισμέναν κἀλαστάσαι· ἰν’ ὀμολογοῖ τοῦ διακριθεῖς τῶν σωμαίων γιγνοῖσθαι, καὶ μὴ κατ’ αἰλομαλίου τροπῆς δεχοῖσθαι. ἐποίησεν ὢν τοῦ δὲ τὸν κόσμον ἐξ ἀπασῶν τῶν ὑλῶν, ὁρῶν αἰλῶν κἀλασκειν αἰσῶν τῶν οὐλοῦ φυσίος, δια τοῦ πασῶν τ’ ἀλλὰ ἐν αἰλῶ περιεχεῖν, ἐνα, μονογενῆ, τελείον, ἐμψυχον τε καὶ λογικον· (κρεσσονα γὰρ τὰ δὲ αἰψυχῶν καὶ ἀλογῶν ἐσῶν) καὶ σφαιροειδῆς σωμα. De Anima Mundi, in Gale’s Opuscula Mythologica, p. 545.

† Δυο αἰλῶς εἰμεν τῶν συμπασιῶν· νοῦν μὲν, τῶν κατὰ λόγον γιγνομένων· ἀναγκῆν δὲ, τῶν βια κατὰ δυνάμεις τῶν σωμαίων. τῆσῶν δὲ, τῶν μὲν, τῶν ταχαῶ φυσίος εἰμεν, δεον τε σημαίνουσῶν, ἀρχῶν τε τῶν ἀρίτων. Ibid. p. 544.

“offspring.” The former, viz. *idea*, he defines to be “something unbegotten, immovable, and abiding, intelligible, and the pattern of things that are produced and changeable\*.”

Afterwards, having said that matter is eternal, he says “there are two opposite principles, *idea*, which may be compared to the male, or the father, and matter to a female, or the mother, and the third,” he adds, “is the offspring of these †,” meaning nature. This is in reality the whole of Plato’s system, and delivered with greater clearness than he has done it himself; and we see that, in effect, it is the doctrine of one God, who made all things out of uncreated matter, from patterns of things existing in his own mind.

\* Τα δε ξυμπαια, ιδεαν, υλαν, αισθηλον τε, οιον εργασιον τυλειων. κ) το μεν, ειμεν αγενατον τε κ) ακινητον, κ) μενον τε, κ) τας, ταυλω φυσιος νοσων τε κ) παραδειγμα των γενωμενων, ακασα εν μεταβολα εσι. De Anima Mundi, in Gale’s Opuscula Mythologica, P. 514.

† Ταυταν δε ταν υλαν αυδιον μεν εφα. — Δυο ων αυδε αρχαι εναντιαι ενι αν το μεν ειδος λογον εχει αρρενος τε κ) πατριος. α δ’ υλα, θηλεος τε και μαλερος. τριτα δε ειμεν τα εκ τυλων εργασια. Ibid. P. 515.

That

That Plato borrowed from Timæus we see in his copying his very phraseology. For he says that, “the origin of the world “is mixed, being produced from the conjunction of *necessity* and *mind, nous* \*.” He also says “we must distinguish two “causes of things, the one necessary, the “other divine †.” Nothing could be more exactly copied.

\* Μεικτὴ γὰρ ἐστὶ τῶδε κόσμος γενεσις, ἐξ ἀνάγκης τε καὶ νοῦς ὑστάσεως ἐγενήθη. Timæus, Opera, p. 533. Ed. Gen:

† Διὸ δὴ χρὴ δύο αἰτίας εἶδη διορίσασθαι· τὸ μὲν ἀνάγκη: τὸ δὲ θεῖον. Ibid. p. 542.

**C H A P T E R   VII.***A View of the Principles of the later Platonists.*

**T**HOSE who are usually called the *later Platonists*, were those philosophers, chiefly of Alexandria, who, a little before, and after the commencement of the christian æra, adopted the general principles of Plato, but not without incorporating with them those of other philosophers, so that theirs was not an absolutely pure and unmixed platonism. However, in their notions concerning *God*, and the *general system of things*, they aimed at this, pretending only to interpret the meaning of Plato, and to reason from his principles, though their refinements have only served to make the system more mysterious and absurd.

**S E C.**

## SECTION I.

*The Doctrines of the later Platonists concerning God and Nature.*

WE see, in the writings of these later Platonists, or may better conjecture from them, what was meant by the *ideal* or *intelligible world*, which makes so great a figure in this system, and which is sometimes confounded with *nous* or *logos*, the seat, receptacle, or place of this ideal world. But in their writings, the term *logos*, of which so much account is made in the works of Philo, and the philosophizing christians, does not much occur; though there can be no difficulty in admitting that it was synonymous to *nous*, or *mind*, each of them signifying the principle of *reason*, or that from which *logos* in its usual acceptation, viz. that of *speech*, proceeds; every thing that is *uttered*, being first *conceived* in the mind, and existing there.

Beside the *visible world*, which is perceived by the organs of sight, these philoso-

phers supposed that there was also an *invisible world*, exactly corresponding to it, capable of being perceived and contemplated by the mind only. And the only probable key to their meaning is to suppose, that this invisible world of ideas, which furnished a pattern for the visible world (always existing in the divine mind, and sometimes confounded with it) was at other times considered as a thing different from the divine being himself, whose mind it was.

When they consider this *intelligible world* as the source and cause from which the visible world was derived, they sometimes speak of it as a *person*, the maker, or *demiurgus* of the world; but though they supposed that there was another principle higher than this *nous*, or *demiurgus*, they seldom or never speak of that as of a person also, so as to have the idea of two intelligent persons at the same time; or if they do, it may be presumed to be only in a mystical or figurative way of speaking. For as, on some occasions, they speak of their *nous*, as a mere *repository of ideas*, the *place*  
of

of the intelligible world, or the intelligible world itself, and no proper person; so, on other occasions, they speak of the highest principle of all, what they call the *good*, not as a *person*, but a *property* only, something belonging to every thing that is divine, to the terrestrial as well as the celestial gods, and even to the soul of man itself. There was, however, enough of personification in what the Platonists said of the divine *nous* or *logos*, to give a handle to Philo, and the christian Fathers, to make a little more of it, as it was very convenient to their purpose to do.

That the real conceptions of the Platonists were not favourable to the doctrine of *two proper divine persons*, may be inferred from its being so generally said, that Plato made no more than *two* principles of things. Thus Diogenes Laertius, in his life of Plato, says that “ he made two principles “ of all things, God and matter, calling “ the former *mind* and *cause*\*.” And though Plutarch in his view of the doctrines of

\* Δυο δε των παλαιων απεφηνεν αρχας, θεου κ̄ υλης, ου κ̄ νυν προσωπολογουει, κ̄ αῑον. Lib. 3. p. 228.



Socrates and Plato, which he says, are the same, says that they held three principles God, matter, and idea, he makes God and *nous* to be the same, and *idea* not to be a person, but an incorporeal substance in the mind of God\*.”

In the dissertation of Maximus Tyrius, one of the most sensible and pleasing of all the Platonists, the title of which is, *What is God according to Plato*, there is no account of any distinction between *the good*, and the *nous*, but only the doctrine of one God, the king and father of all, and of many other inferior gods, the children of the supreme, reigning with him †. The divine intellect, or *nous*, he considers as a *power* of the divine mind, and he compares the quickness of its operations to that of *sight*, while those of the human in-

\* Σωκράτης ἡ Πλάτων (αἱ γὰρ αὐταὶ περὶ παντός ἑκάτερο δοξαὶ) τρεῖς ἀρχαί, τὸν θεόν, τὴν ὕλην, τὴν ἰδέαν. ἐπὶ δὲ ὁ θεὸς ὁ νῦς, ἡ δὲ τοῦ ὑπὸκειμένου πρῶτον γενέσκει ἡ φθορά, ἰδέα δὲ νοστὶ ἀσώματος, ἐν τοῖς νοημασὶ ἡ τὰς φαντασιασὶς τῆς θεῆς. οὗτος θεὸς νῦς ἐπὶ τῆς κοσμοῦ. De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. 1. cap. 3. Opera, vol. 2. p. 878.

† Ὅτι θεὸς εἰς, πάντων βασιλεὺς, ἡ πατὴρ, ἡ θεὸς πάντων, θεὸς πάντων, συναρχόντες θεῶν. Diff. 1. p. 6.

tellekt resemble *speech* only\* ; or the former, he says, may be compared to the darting of the light of the sun, and the latter to the motion of the sun. “Such,” says he, “does the academic angel (i. e. Plato) exhibit to us the Father, and the author of all things †.” Here is no personification of the *nous*, or *logos*, at all ; and yet I doubt not, he delivered the genuine principles of platonism, divested of mystery and figure.

According to Proclus, the *nous*, or reason, of man, is a principle exactly similar to that of God. “Our *nous*,” he says, “is separate from the *good*, and wants something, and therefore desires pleasure, for the perfection of the man, but the divine *nous* always partakes of the *good*, and is united to it, and therefore is divine ‡.”

\* Τον μὲν θεῖον νῦν τῷ ὄρει, τὸν δὲ ἀνθρωπίνον τῷ λεγεῖν. Diff. 1. p. 12.

† Ο μὲν θεῖος νῦν κατὰ τὴν παραβολὴν τῆς ἡλίου πάλαι εφόρει τὸν ἐν τῇ γῆ τοποῦν ἀδρωῶς, ὁ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνος κατὰ τὴν πορείαν αὐτῆς ἀλλοίε ἀλλὰ τὰ μέρη τῆς ὁλῆς ἐπιπορευόμενος. Τεῖνον μὲν δὴ ὁ ἐξ ἀκαδημαίας ἡμῖν ἀγγελῶς διδῶσι πάλαι καὶ γενήτην τῆς σωματικῆς. Ibid. p. 12.

‡ Ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἡμέτερος νῦν τῆς ἀγάθης διεξευκταί καὶ ἐστὶν ἐνδεής, καὶ διατρίβει δὴ πρὸς καὶ τῆς πῶτος δέξεται πρὸς τὴν τελειότητα τῆς ἀνθρωπίνου. ο



“ *nous* is the *Demiurgus*, who makes the  
 “ soul, and the *nous* being a *cause*, he (Plato)  
 “ calls the Father, *the good*, being some-  
 “ thing above the *nous*, and above *essence*.  
 “ He also often calls *being* and *nous*, *idea* ;  
 “ so that Plato acknowledged that *nous* or  
 “ *idea* was from *the good*, and the *soul* from  
 “ the *nous*, and that this account of things  
 “ is not new, but though formerly given,  
 “ was not well unfolded ; and that the mo-  
 “ dern accounts are explanatory of them \*.”

By *soul* in this place, Plotinus probably understood the soul of the universe, or perhaps *soul* in general, which he supposed to be, in all cases, of the same nature ; and with the Platonists this was always considered as a principle inferior to *nous*. Thus Jamblichus says, “ *Nous* is the governor  
 “ and king of all, being the demiurgic art  
 “ of the whole. It is always with the

\* Δημιουργος γὰρ ὁ νῦς αἰῶν. τὸν δὲ φησὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ποιεῖν ἐν τῷ κράτηρι ἐκείνῳ. τὴ αἰῶν δὲ νῦς οὐλὸς πατέρα φησὶ ταγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἐπέκεινα νῦς ἐπέκεινα νοῦς. πολλαχῶς δὲ τὸ οὐ καὶ τὸν νῦν, τὴν ἰδέαν λέγει. ὡς παλαιὰ εἰδέναι ἐκ μὲν ταγαθὸν τὸν νῦν, τὴν ἰδέαν ἐκ δὲ τῆς νῦς, τὴν ψυχὴν. καὶ εἶναι τῆς λογῆς τῆσδε, μὴ καινῆς ἢ μηδὲ νῦν. ἀλλὰ παλαιὰ μὲν εἰρηδα μὴ ἀναπεπλάμενως τῆς δὲ νῦν λογῆς ἐξηγήσας ἐκείνων γεγονηναί.  
 En. 5. lib. 1. cap. 8. p. 489,

“ gods,

“ gods, without imperfection, and without  
 “ defect, consisting of itself in one single  
 “ operation ; whereas the soul partakes of  
 “ *nous*, but only in part, and multiform,  
 “ looking to the director of the whole \*.”  
 In this passage, however, it is pretty evident, that the writer did not consider *nous* as an intelligent person, distinct from the supreme being, but his own proper wisdom and power, and very different from what the christian *logos* came to be.

As the Platonists confounded the *nous* with the supreme being, whose *nous* it was, so they likewise confounded this *nous* with the *ideas* belonging to it. Plotinus, after observing that the mind, or *nous*, perceives the ideas that are in it, considers whether these ideas be the *nous* itself, or something different from it ; and concludes with saying, that “ they may be considered in both “ lights, distinguishable only in the con-

\* Νους τοιουν ηγεμων κ̅ βασιλευς των ολων, τεχνη δημιουργικη τ̅ παν-  
 τος, τοις μεν θεοις ωσαυτως αιει παρρητι, τελειωσ κ̅ ανενδωσ, καλα μιασ  
 ενεργειαν εγωσαν εν εαυτη καθαρωσ . η δε ψυχη ν̅ τε μελεχει μερικη κ̅  
 πολλυειδ̅ς, εις την τε ολην τε προφασιασ αναποδλεπονη̅. Sect. I.  
 cap. 8. p. 12.

“ ception

“ception of them ; so that the *nous* and the  
 “ things perceived by it, may be the same,  
 “ as really existing, for it does not perceive  
 “ altogether in another, but in itself, on  
 “ account of its having the thing perceived  
 “ in itself. Or there is no reason why the  
 “ thing perceived may not be the *nous*, con-  
 “ sidered in a state of fixity, unity, and  
 “ quiet \*.” In another place, speaking of  
 the mind and its conceptions, he says, “ The  
 “ *nous* is at the same time *all things*, but  
 “ not altogether : but each has its separate  
 “ power ; for all *nous* comprehends *ideas* as  
 “ a genus, and as the whole comprehends  
 “ the parts †.” According to this view of  
 things, it should seem that the *nous* was  
 considered as the same thing with the whole  
 stock of its conceptions or ideas, and had no  
 proper intellectual power belonging to it.

\* Ἐπειτα εἶδεν κωλυει, οσαν τω λεγομενω εν ειναι αμφο, διακριμενα  
 δε τη νοησει . ειπερ μονου ως ου, το μεν νοηλον, το δε νουν. Ο γαρ κα-  
 θορα ε φησιν εν ελερω πασιως αλλ εν αυτω, τω εν αυτω το νοηλον εχειν.  
 η το μεν νοηλω εδεν κωλυει ε νεν ειναι εν εασει, ε ενοητη, ε ηουχηα. En.  
 4. lib. 9. cap. 1. p. 356.

† Ουτως εν ε ποσω μαλλον, ο νος εστι ομν πασια . και αυ εχ ομν  
 ελι εκασου δυναμις ιδια . ο δε πας νος, περιεχει ωσπερ γενος ειδη . και  
 ωσπερ ολον μερη. En. 5. lib. 9. cap. 6. p. 560.

In

In another place he expresses this more decisively, saying, that *nous* and *idea* are the same thing, and even that *idea* is the whole *nous*, and that *nous* is the same thing with all the ideas, just as knowledge is the same with all the theorems \*. It must be observed, however, that in the last clause he used the term *εἶδη*, or forms of things, and not *ἰδέα*, as if the latter was that which contained the former; and yet, as Diogenes Laertius observes, they are used promiscuously by the Platonists.

When the Platonists speak of the inferiority of the *nous* to God, they seem to do it as if they were merely fixing a scale of metaphysical *principles*, and not to have had an idea of their being two intelligent *persons*. And though they occasionally personify each of them, yet it is separately, and never, as far as I have observed, both together. This was reserved for the christian Platonists. To make this more evident, I shall produce

\* Οὐκ εἴερα τὴν ἑκάστην ἰδέαν, ἀλλ' ἑκάστην νῦν. καὶ ὅλος μὲν ὁ νῦν τῶν πάντων εἰδῶν, ἑκάστου δὲ εἶδος νῦν ἑκάστος, ὡς ἡ ὅλη ἐπιστήμη τὰ πάντα διηγεῖται. En. 5. lib. 9. cap. 8. p. 561.

a few extracts from Proclus respecting the inferiority of the *nous*.

“The *nous*,” says he, “is God, on account of the intellectual and intelligible light, which is more ancient than *nous* \*.” Here *nous* is personified; but then the *light*, which is represented as superior to it, is not so. In the following passages the first principle is personified, but not the subordinate one. “What ever is God,” he says, “is above *essence*, and *life*, and *nous* †.” “*Nous* is the work and the first production of the gods ‡.” “*Unity* is God of itself,

\* Και νους ἀρχὴ θεός, διὰ τὸ φῶς τὸ νοερόν, καὶ τὸ νοητόν, τὸ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ νῦν πρεσβύτερον. In Platonem, lib. 2. cap. 4. p. 91.

Both the terms *νοερός* and *νοητός* occur in the writings of the Platonists, and, in some cases, it is not easy to make any difference in translating them, though the former should be rendered *intellectual*, and the latter *intelligible*, or *perceived by the mind*. However, Proclus says, “they may be considered as the same, on account of the fullness of the light which belongs to the latter.” Καὶ τὸ νοητὸν αἴμα καὶ νοερόν διὰ τὴν εἰς αὐτὸ καθήκοντα τὴν φῶς ἀποπληρωσιν. In Platonem, lib. 2. cap. 1. p. 91.

† Διὸν δὲ ὅτι πάντων ἐστὶν ἐπεκείνα των εἰρημένων, ἀρχὴ θεός, ἔσθιας, καὶ ζωῆς, καὶ νῦν. Infit. cap. 115. p. 463.

‡ Καὶ γὰρ ὁ νους δημιουργημα, καὶ γεννημα των θεων ἐστὶ τὸ πρῶτιστον. In Platonem, lib. 1. cap. 21. p. 55.



“ nous most godlike, soul divine, body like  
“ God\*.”

The passage which looks the most like the personification of both the first and second principles, is the following; but then the whole has the air of figure, so that the literal meaning is by no means clear. “ The Demiurgus, and Father of the universe, has the third place among the intellectual kings †.”

In this scale of principles, it was usual to consider that which is prior in rank, as the Father, container, and nourisher of that which is posterior. Though, therefore, the nous be the Son with respect to the God, it is the Father with respect to the soul, and the nourisher of it, as Plotinus expressly says ‡. And yet, the nous was only the image of the good §.

\* Και η μεν εσσι, αυτηθιν θεος· ο δε νους, διουτατων· ο δε ψυχη, θεια· το δε σωμα, θεοειδης. Inlit. cap. 129. p. 470.

† Ο μεν τοιουθι δημιουργος, και πατηρ τουδε τε παντος, τε τριτην ταξιν λαχων εν τοις νοητοις βασιλευσι. Proclus in Plotinect, lib. 6. cap. 6. p. 355.

‡ Ουσα [ψυχη] ατοικησασα· και η λογισμοι ο νους αυτης· και η τελειωσις ατ' αυτη παρ' η· οισι πατηρ εκδραστητης—Νους εν επιμαλλοις θεοτιφα· ποιη· και το πατηρ εκει και το παρησας. En. 5. lib. 1. cap. 3. p. 484.

§ Εικον· α δε εικων λογισμω τον νουν. En. 5. lib. 1. cap. 7. p. 486.

When we find such confusion in the ideas of these Platonists about their *nous*, and the *ideas* belonging to it, we cannot be surprized at their likewise confounding the *nous* with the supreme Being, whose *nous* it was; sometimes calling the world the offspring of God, and sometimes the offspring of the idea of God, as in the following passage of Julian: “ This universe being  
 “ the offspring of the idea of the first and  
 “ the greatest good, being in its stable essence from eternity, received also power  
 “ among the intellectual gods †.”

I consider Julian as a Platonist from the admiration which he expresses of Plato's principles, and his frequent quoting of him; and he is as distinguished a Platonist as the rest by the inextricable confusion of his ideas on these subjects, as may be perceived in the following passage, in which it is not easy to say in what light he con-

\* *Αυτος δε ο συμπασις, αλε δη τε πρωτα κη μεγαυς της ιδεας τε αγαθου γεγονως εκγονος, υποστας αυτε περι την μονιμον εσσαν εξ αυτης, κη την εν τοις νοεροις θεοις παρεδεξατο δυνατειαν.* Or. 4. Opera, vol. I. p. 133.

sidered the *intelligible world*; but he seems to have thought it to be a kind of *magazine of ideas*, or patterns of things. And yet he represents *the good* as producing the world, as well as those ideas, and as making the world an image, not of them, but of himself. Speaking of the visible world, he says, that “ it is preserved by nothing im-  
“ mediately but a fifth body, the head of  
“ which is the solar ray, but as it were in  
“ the second gradation by the intelligible  
“ world, and in the highest place by the  
“ king of all, about whom all things are;  
“ he whom, whether it be lawful to call  
“ one that is above *nous*, or the idea of  
“ things that exist, which I call the *whole*  
“ *intelligible*, or *the one*, because *the one* seems  
“ to be oldest of all, or what Plato was used  
“ to call *the good*; for this is the simple  
“ cause to all things that are, of beauty,  
“ perfection, unity, and immense power.  
“ Remaining in itself according to its pri-  
“ mary operative essence, he produced the  
“ sun the greatest God from himself, out  
“ of the middle of intellectual things and  
demiurgic

“ demiurgie causes, in all respects like to  
“ himself .”

As the visible world is sometimes considered as *the child of God*, so the *intelligible world*, which supplied a pattern for it, is also sometimes considered in the same light, and called a child of the Supreme Being; and the following description of this child, and its properties, by Plotinus, who certainly thought himself well acquainted with it, is mysterious enough; “ As a person  
“ looking up to the heavens, and seeing the  
“ brightness of the stars, enquires who is  
“ their maker, so a person who looks into  
“ the intelligible world will admire the  
“ maker of *it*, and enquire who established

\* Ουκ υπ' αλλη μεν φρενιμεν<sup>⊙</sup> η προσεχως μεν υπο τε πεμπτις  
σωμι<sup>⊙</sup> ε το κεφαλιον εστιν αυλις ηλιω. βαθμω δε ωσπερ δευτερω τω νοητω  
κοσμω · προσευτερωσ δε ει δια των παντων βασιλευσ, περιον παντα εστιν.  
Ουι<sup>⊙</sup> τουνυ. ειτε το επικεινα τε νε καλειν αυλον θεμισ, ειτε ιδεαν των  
ενων, ο δη φημι το νοητον συμπαυ. ειτε εν επειδη παντων το εν δοκει ως  
προσευτεριον · ειτε ο Πλατων ειωθεν ονομαζειν το αγαθον · αυτη δη εν η  
μονοειδησ των ολων αυλια πασι τοις βσιν εξηγεμενη, καλλισ τε, κ' τελειο-  
τη<sup>⊙</sup>, ενωσewis τε, κ' δυναμewis αμηχανε · καλα την εν αυτη μενβσα πρω-  
τεργον βσιαν, μεσον εκ μεσων των νοερων κ' δημιουργικων αυλιων ηλιον θεου  
μεγιστον ανεφτηεν εξ εαυτις, παντα ομοιον εαυτω. Or. 4. Opera, vol.  
I. p. 132.



following passage from Jamblichus, who, in an account of the principles of Hermes, or those Egyptian doctrines which were probably the source of all the knowledge (or to speak more properly, of all the mistakes) of Plato, describes the Supreme Being, or *the good*; and yet the greater part of the passage gives us the idea of two different gods, one of which was derived from the other. But then the *god* and *king* that he speaks of as the inferior, was, perhaps, no other than the sun, as his Latin translator has supposed, and therefore it gives us no distinct idea of the personification of the divine *nous* or *logos*.

“ Before all things,” he says, “ that re-  
 ally are, and the principles of all things,  
 there is one God, prior to the first God  
 and king, immoveable, remaining in his  
 own immoveable unity, not mixed with  
 any thing intelligible, or any thing else,  
 but the pattern of that God who is his  
 own father, his own child, and the only  
 father of the essentially good. For it is  
 prior and greater, and the fountain of all,  
 and the source of all the first intellectual  
 ideas,

“ ideas. From this one God shone forth the  
 “ God who is self-sufficient, for he is the  
 “ principal, and the God of Gods, unity  
 “ from one, before all essence, and the prin-  
 “ ciple of essence, for from him comes es-  
 “ sence and entity. He is therefore called  
 “ the principle of what is intelligible.  
 “ These are the oldest principles of all  
 “ things which Hermes places before the  
 “ ethereal, the empyreal and celestial gods\*.”

We shall the less wonder at this confu-  
 sion of ideas, if we attend to another of the  
 Platonic maxims, viz. That *being* and *energy*  
 are the same things. This was before cited  
 from Julian, and I now find the same in  
 Plotinus, who says expressly, that “ *energy*

\* Προ των ούλων ούλων, ἢ των ούλων αρχων ἐστὶ θεός εἰς πρῶτον, καὶ  
 τὰ πρῶτος θεὸς καὶ βασιλεύς, ἀμνηστὸν ἐν μονήῃ τὰ αὐτὴ ἐνοήστὸν μενῶν.  
 εἶπε γὰρ νοήτων αὐτῶ ἐπιπλεμεῖται, εἶπε ἀλλοθι. παραδειγμα δὲ ἰδρύεται τὰ  
 αὐτοπαύρον, αὐτογενε. καὶ μονοπαύρον θεός, τὰ ούλων αγαθὰ. μείζον γὰρ  
 τι καὶ πρῶτον. καὶ πηγὴ των πᾶσι καὶ πνεύματι των νοημένων πρῶτων εἰδῶν  
 ούλων. ἀπο δὲ τὰ ἐνος, τέλει. ο αὐτοαρκής θεός αὐτὸν ἐξέλαμψε. διὸ καὶ αὐ-  
 τοπαύρον, καὶ αὐτοαρκής. ἀρχὴ γὰρ εἶδος καὶ θεός θεῶν. μονὰς ἐκ τὰ ἐνος,  
 πρῶτον καὶ ἀρχὴ τῆς ἐσιας. ἀπ’ αὐτῆ γὰρ ἐσιότης ἢ ἡ ἐσια. διὸ καὶ  
 νοητοαρκής πρῶτον ἀγορευεῖται. Αὐτὰ μὲν ἐν εἰσιν ἀρχαὶ πρῶτον αὐτῶν πᾶσι  
 ἴσως Ἑρμῆς πρῶτων αἰθεριῶν καὶ ἐμπυριῶν θεῶν πρῶτον εἶται, καὶ των ἐπι-  
 ραυτων. Sect. 8. cap. 2. p. 158.

“ is

“ is the same thing with *being* \*.” Accordingly, he calls the soul “ one simple energy, “ and as its nature is *to live*, it therefore cannot perish †.” This is evidently making the soul to be nothing more than the principle, or property, of *life*; but then this is an extraordinary argument for its immortality, as it comes to nothing more than saying that *life* and *death* are opposite things. But it is not my business in this place to attend to the many absurdities of the Platonists about the soul, and therefore I shall return to my proper subject.

In most of the preceding passages *the good* is described as synonymous to the Supreme Being, and of course a proper person; but it is generally mentioned in the neuter gender, and is described in such a manner as gives us the idea of a principle, property, or power, capable of being communicated to other beings, and even to the soul. “ There “ is,” says Jamblichus, “ a *good* which transcends *essence*, that which is essentially

\* Εστι δε η το ου ενεργεια. En. 5. lib. 9. cap. 8. p. 561.

† Ψυχη δε μια η αιπλη ενεργεια βασα, εν τω ζην φυσικη, κ τοιουν ταυτη φθαρσειαι. En. 4. lib. 7. cap. 12. p. 466.



“ good, I mean the most ancient and valuable essence, and in itself incorporeal, the peculiar property of the gods, which, in all kinds of them, preserves their peculiar distribution and order, which is never separated from them, and is the same in them all.” He also says that “ souls which govern bodies have not the essence of the good, nor the first cause of good, which is prior to essence, but a certain portion, and acquisition from it\*.”

Proclus generally speaks of *the good* in the neuter gender, as if it was a *principle*, and no *person*, and that they were mere metaphysical considerations which led him to place this *good* at the head of the universe, is evident from his reasoning on the subject. “ The good,” he says, “ is above every

\* Ἐστὶ δὲ ἐν τ᾽ ἀγαθόν, τὸ τε ἐπέμεινα τῆς ἑσίας, καὶ καὶ ἑσίαν ὑπαρχόν· ἐκείνην λέγω τὴν ἑσίαν τὴν πρεσβυτάτην καὶ τιμιωτάτην, καὶ καθ' αὐτὴν ἑσίαν ἀσωμάτων· δευτὸν ἰδίωμα ἐξαιρέτων, καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γενητὰ περὶ αὐτῆς οὐκ, τὴν μὲν ἐν αὐτῶν τὴν οἰκειαν διανομὴν καὶ τάξιν, καὶ ἐκ ἀποσπώμενον ταύτης, τὸ αὐτὸ δ' ὁμοίως ἐν οἰοῖς ὡσαύτως ὑπαρχόν· Ψυχῶν δὲ ταῖς ἀρχήσιν ἀσωμάτων, — ἑσία μὲν ἀγαθὸν ἐκ εἰς παρέσθιν, ἢ δ' αὖτις τὸ ἀγαθὸν πρότερον ἑσίας καὶ τῆς ἑσίας. ἐποχὴ δὲ τις ἀπ' αὐτῆς καὶ ἐξὶς παραγίνεσθαι. Sect. I. cap. 5. p. 8.

“ thing

“ thing, because all desire good \*.” But from the idea of a metaphysical principle, we easily pass to that of a *cause*, and from a cause to a *being*, or *person*. “ The good, “ (*αγαθον*)” he says, “ is the principle and “ first cause †,” and the first cause he makes synonymous to God. “ God and the good “ (*αγαθον*) are the same. For that beyond “ which nothing is, and which all desire, is “ God ‡.”

It was by metaphysical reasoning that the Platonists made *the good* to be synonymous to *the one*, all numbers consisting of unity repeated, and therefore proceeding from it, and being resolvable into it, as they said that all things proceed from, and return to, their respective causes; a maxim which occurs perpetually in Proclus. “ The one “ and the good (*αγαθον*)” he says, “ are the “ same §.”

\* Ει γαρ πάντα τα οντα τὰ αγαθὰ ἐφίεται, δηλον ὅτι το πρώτως αγαθον ἐπικειναι ἐστὶ τῶν ὄντων. Infit. cap. 8. p. 418.

† Πάντων τῶν ὄντων ἀρχὴ καὶ αἴτια πρώτη ἐστὶ τὸ αγαθον ἐστὶ. Ibid. cap. 12. p. 420.

‡ Καὶ γὰρ τ' αγαθον καὶ θεὸς ταυτον. καὶ γὰρ μηδὲν ἐστὶν ἐπικειναι, καὶ ἅπαντα ἐφίεται, θεὸς τὸ αἰον. Ibid. cap. 113. p. 462.

§ Ταυτον γὰρ ἐν καὶ τ' αγαθον. Ibid. cap. 20. p. 425. cap. 25. p. 428.

Though

Though every thing was by the Platonists called *αρχη*, or *principle*, with respect to that which immediately followed it, yet in the strict sense they applied this term to the first and highest principle only. “No-thing,” says Proclus, is superior to the “*αρχη*”; for if *essence* was before *the one*, “*essence* must be *the one*, but it is not “so\*.” He also makes *life* synonymous to the first principle, for he arranges all kinds of beings in the following order, *life, nous, soul*, and *body*†.

As the Supreme Being, or cause, must, according to these sublime Platonists, be superior to every thing, it is amusing enough to see how they were puzzled in making him superior to *essence*, which also they strangely enough make synonymous to *nous*‡. If God must be superior to *essence*, and be the *cause* of *essence*, they were well aware that he must then have made himself, since

\* Της γὰρ ἀρχῆς ἕθεν εἶναι κρείττον ἐστὶν ἀναγκαῖον. εἰ δὲ ἡ οὐσία πρὸ τῆς οὐσίας, ὡς περὶ τοῦ εἶναι τὴν οὐσίαν τὸ ἐν, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ἡ οὐσία τὸ ἐν. In Platonem, lib. 2. cap. 4. p. 84.

† Ἡ μὲν ἐκ προοδὸς τῶν οὐσιῶν, αὐτὴ, διὰ ζωῆς, καὶ νῦς, καὶ ψυχῆς, εἰς τὴν Σωματικὴν τελευτήσασα φύσιν. Ibid. lib. 3. cap. 6. p. 131.

‡ Καὶ γὰρ ὁ νῦς οὐσία. Ibid. lib. 2. cap. 4. p. 93.

he must have *essence* as the foundation of his other properties. This, therefore, seems to have been admitted by the Platonists, and their reasoning on this subject is truly not a little curious. Plotinus says, that “ essence is not a cause with respect to God, “ but God with respect to essence, for he “ made it for himself, and having made it, “ placed it without himself, he not wanting “ essence, since he made it; for, considered “ as *being*, he did not make *being*. But it “ will be said he must then have been be- “ fore he was, if he made himself, being “ his own maker; but we must say, that he “ is not to be considered as a thing made, “ but as a maker\*.” On this a question is started, whether God could have made himself otherwise than he did. But it is answered, that “ God being *will itself*, there

\* Ουδε εστιν αυτω αρχη η οσια αυτου . αλλ' αυτος αρχη της οσιας ων, εκ αυτου εποιησε την οσιαν . αλλα ποιησας ταυτην εξω ειασεν εαυτου . ατε ουδεν τε ειπαι δεομενος, ος εποιησεν αυτου . κ τωινυν ουδε καθ ο εστι ποιει το εστι . Τι εν κ συμβαινει ειποι τις αν ωριν η γενεσθαι γεγενησται . ει γαρ ποιει εαυτου, το μεν εαυτου κτω εστι . Το δ' αυ ποιειν, εστιν ηδη προ εαυτου, τε ωδιμενε οντος αυτου . προς ο δη λεκτεον, ως ολωσ κ τακτεον κατα τον ποιημενο, αλλα κατα τον ποιητηα . En. 6. lib. 8. cap. 19, 20. p. 754.

“ could

“ could be no will prior to his existence\*”  
 Proclus says, that “ What subsists of itself,  
 “ being one, is at the same time the *cause*  
 “ and the caused †.”

The notion of God having made himself,  
 or being *his own father*, and *his own son*, is  
 well exposed by the author of the *Recogni-*  
*tions*, as implying that he must have existed  
 before he did ‡.

\* ΕΔΥΝΑΤΟ εν αλλοις ποιειν εαυτον η ο επομοσε—καθε το  
 προς βελησεως αρα . παρωτον αρα η βελησις αυτου. Plotinus,  
 En. 6. lib. 8. cap. 21. p. 755.

† Εν γαρ εν αμα η αυτων εστι η αυτιατων. Infit. 46.  
 p. 436.

‡ Sine principio ergodicimus Deum, ineffabili providen-  
 tia demonstrante: qui non a seipso factus est, nec a seipso  
 genitus: est enim sine principio et ingenitus: Ingeniti  
 autem appellatio, non quid sit, nobis intelligere dat, sed  
 quod non est factus. Autopatoran vero et Autogeneton,  
 hoc est, ipsum sibi patrem, ipsumque sibi filium, qui vo-  
 caverunt illud quod est ingenitum, contumeliam facere  
 conati sunt, dubiis deservientes rationibus. Indigere enim  
 nativitate illud quod erat prius quam nasceretur, parvulo-  
 rum more intelligentes, putaverunt; et illud quod fuerat  
 pro eo quod fuerit ponentes, quasi per seipsum factum,  
 dicere, infania insanierunt; et plantationibus comparare  
 illud quod est ingenitum ut dæmoniosi, ausi sunt. Lib. 3.  
 sect. 3. p. 519.

This

This doctrine of the superiority of the divine essence to every thing else, led these Platonists to some curious distinctions with respect to *the place of God*; and as they imagined that his being *contained* in any thing would imply some kind of inferiority, they therefore made him the *container*. “The Gods,” says Jamblichus, “are not subject to any part of the universe, nor is any part free from them; but, being superior, they are not so *in it* as to be contained by it, but they contain all things, and terrestrial things have their essence in the divine fullness\*.” To illustrate this, he says, that “as light contains the things which are enlightened by it, so the power of the gods contains the things which partake of it †.” Agreeable to

\* Οὕτε γὰρ οἱ θεοὶ κρατεῖνται ἐν τισὶ τῶν κοσμοῦ μερεσίν, ἢ ἐν ταῖς περὶ γῆν ἀμοιβρα αὐτῶν καθέστηκεν. ἀλλ’ οἱ μὲν κρείττονες ἐν αὐτῷ ὡς ὑπο μὴδέν τι περιεχόνται, καὶ περιεχούσι πάντα ἐν αὐτοῖς. τὰ δ’ ἐπὶ γῆς ἐν τοῖς πληρώμασι τῶν θεῶν ἐχούσι τὸ εἶναι. sect. 1. Cap. 9. p. 15.

† Ὡς περ ἐν τῷ φωσὶ περιεχεῖται τὰ φωλιζόμενα, ἕως καὶ τῶν θεῶν ἡ δύναμις τὰ μετὰ λαμβανόντα αὐτῆς ἐξώθεν περιείληθε. Ibid sect. 1. cap. 9. p. 17.

this,

this, Plotinus says, that “intelligible place  
“is in God, and not God in it\*.”

The soul, likewise, having the same superiority to the body, that God has to the intelligible world, it follows from the same principle, that the soul of the world is not contained in the world, but the world in its soul. Accordingly, Plotinus says, “The  
“soul is not in it, but it is in the soul;  
“for the body is not the place for the soul,  
“but the soul is in the *nous* †.” Pursuing the same idea, he would have said that the *nous* was in *the good*.

Again, as the soul of man bears the same relation to the body of man, that the soul of the world bears to the world, Plotinus says, that “Plato, giving a soul to the body,  
“did well in saying that the body was in  
“the soul.” He illustrates this by saying, in the same connexion, that it is more proper to say that “air is in light, than

\* Ο δε νοητός τόπος εν αυτω, αυτος δε εκ εν αλλω. En. 6. lib. 7. cap. 35. p. 727.

† Ψυχη δε εκ εν εκεινω αλλ’ εκεινος εν αυτη. εδε γαρ τόπος το σωμα τη ψυχη, αλλα ψυχη μεν εν να. En. 5. lib. 5. cap. 9. p. 528.

“ that

“ that light is in air\*.” From this specimen of the *physics* of Plato, some idea may be formed of his *metaphysics*; for he is just as *great* in the one as he is in the other. If we may reduce to some general maxim all his observations concerning *the place of things*, we should perhaps say, that when two things, which have mutual action, exist together, that which is the more refined, and the more excellent of the two, is to be considered as the *container*, and the other as the *contained*.

The word *trinity* does not much occur in the writings of the Platonists, till we come to Proclus, who has a *trinity of trinities*, and pretends to find them all in Plato. I am far from being able to develop the ideas of Proclus on this subject, and shall only extract from him so much as may serve to shew, that he did not mean a trinity of *persons*, but only of *principles*. “ Unity,” he says, “ must precede the tri-

\* Ωσε ορθως ἔχειν ἢ ενταυθα λεγειν, ως ο απρ εν τω φωτι .  
 ηπέρ το φως, εν τω αερι . Διο ἢ Πλατων καλος την Δυχην  
 ενθεις εν τω σωματι επι παντος, αλλα το σωμα εν τη ψυχη.  
 En. 4. lib. 3. cap. 22. p. 388.



“nity\*.” He speaks of a “Demiurgus, as  
 “placed before the trinity †.” “All trinity  
 “is *wholeness* ‡.” “In every trinity there  
 “is an end, an infinite, and a mixed ||.”  
 “Every thing divine is fair, wise, and  
 “powerful. This trinity belongs to all  
 “the gods §.” “For the three trinities  
 “themselves declare, mystically the un-  
 “known cause of the first, and altogether  
 “incommunicable God ¶.”

With respect to these different trinities,  
 he says, “the first trinity is called one be-

\* Δει δε αυ προ της τριαδ⊕, και προ παντ⊕ πληθους εν ενιαση  
 διακωσμω την μοναδα υπεραρχειν. Πασαι γαρ ταξεις θεων απο μο-  
 νοδ⊕ αρχουσι. In Platonem, lib. 5. cap. 14. p. 281.

† Και ο μεν εις δημιουργος προ της τριαδ⊕ τελουμεν⊕. Ibid.  
 6. cap. 6. p. 356.

‡ Και εως η μεν συμπασα τριας ολοτης εστιν. Ibid. lib. 3. cap.  
 20, p. 166.

|| Εν εκαστη γαρ εστι περας, απειρον, μηλον. Ibid. lib. 3. c. 13.  
 p. 142.

§ Λεγει τοιουν ο Σωκρατης ως αρα παν εστι το θειον καλον, σοφον,  
 δυνατον, η την τριαδα ταυτην διηκειν επι πασας ενδεικνυται τας των θεων  
 προσδες. Ibid. lib. 1. cap. xxi. p. 56.

¶ Και γαρ αι τρεις αιται τριαδες μυστικως επαγγελουσι την τε πρωτην  
 θεα, η αμεθεκτε πανηλως αγνωστον αιταν. Ibid. lib. 3. c. 14.  
 p. 143.

“ing.”

“ing\*.” He also speaks of the first trinity as establishing all things, the second as giving them motion, and the third as reducing things to their first principles †.” But the whole is most obscurely expressed. “The second trinity,” he says, “is called *wholeness*, perceived by the mind ‡.” “Its parts, he says, “are *the one*, and *the being*, which are the extreme, and the middle power joins them, but does not perfectly unite them, as in the former trinity.” Ib. “This second trinity, he says, “is in the Timæus, called *αιων* ||.” “After this,”

\* Καλείται δ' ἐν ἡ πρώτῃ τριάδι, ἐν οὐ. In Platonem, lib. 3: cap. 20. p. 164.

† Ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν ἡ μὲν πρώτη τριάς ἐδραζέειν ἐλέγξει τὰ πάντα, καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων τὴν δευτέραν τριάδα. μένει γὰρ ὁ αἰὼν ἐν αὐτῇ ἑαδερῶς. ἡ δὲ μετὰ ταύτην, προοδὸς, καὶ κινήσεως, καὶ τῆς κατ' ἐνεργεῖαν ζωῆς τοῖς ὅλοις χορηγός. ἡ δὲ τρίτη, τῆς ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν ἐπιτροφῆς, καὶ τῆς τελεωδότητος συνελισσῶσης τὰ δευτέρα πάντα πρὸς τὰς ἐαυτῶν ἀρχάς. Ibid. lib. 4. cap. 3. p. 184.

‡ Καλείται τοίνυν ἡ δευτέρα τριάς, ὁλότης νοήσι. μερῶν δὲ αὐτῆς, τὸ ἐν, καὶ τὸ οὐ ἀρχὰ λέγω. μετὰ δὲ ἡ δύναμις ἕσα καὶ αὐτὰ συνιαπεί, καὶ ἔχουσι (καθὰπερ ἐν τῇ πρὸ αὐτῆς) τὸ ἐν, καὶ τὸ οὐ. Ibid. lib. 3. cap. 20. p. 165.

|| Τὴν γὰρ μὲν δευτέραν μετὰ ταύτην ἐν Τιμαίῳ μὲν, αἰὼνα προσεβίβηκεν. Ibid. p. 169.

he says, “we see the third trinity advanced, “in which all intelligible multitude appears, in which we also see *wholeness*, but “consisting of many parts\*.”

When my readers have perfectly understood these few passages relating to the Platonic trinities, let them proceed to what Proclus farther says of the *Demiurgic trinity* †, and of the *Demiurgic unity* taken “from the trinity of the governing Fathers ‡,” and then he will be pretty well prepared for the study of the christian trinity.

\* Μέλα δε ταύτα, την τριάδα νοησωμεν εφεξης, αλλην προμισαν, εν η το νοητον πληθος εκφαινεται παν, ην χ' αυτην, ολόηλα μεν, αλλ' εκ μερων πολλων υφιστησιν ο Παρμενιδης. In Platonem, lib. 3. cap. 20. p. 166.

† Και ωσπαρ η τριάς η δημιουργικη μελεχει της προς αυτον ενωσεως. Ibid. lib. 6: cap. 7. p. 358.

‡ Οτι μεν εν η δημιουργικη μονας, της τριαδος των ηγεμονικων πατερων εξηρημενη. Ibid. cap. 8. p. 359.

## SECTION II.

*Of the Doctrine of the Platonists concerning the Union of the Soul with God, and general Observations.*

HAVING seen this strange confusion of ideas respecting the divine nature, its operations and influences, we shall the less wonder at the mysticism of these Platonists with respect to the exaltation of the mind of man by a supposed union with the divine nature, so as to be *supported* and *nourished* by it; for it was a maxim with them, that every thing is perfected and nourished by its proper *cause*, as Jamblichus says, “the soul is perfected by the “*nous*, and nature by the soul; and in like “manner other things are nourished by “their causes\*.” One would think, however, that, admitting this principle, it might be sufficient to suppose every thing

\*. Ψυχη μὲν γὰρ ἀπο τῆς τελειότητος, φύσις δὲ, ἀπο ψυχῆς. τὰ τε ἀλλὰ ὡσαύτως ἀπο τῶν αἰτιῶν τρέφεται. Cap 10. sect. 5. p. 126.

to be perfected by its proper and *immediate cause*; and, therefore, that the mind of man should be perfected by its union to the *celestial gods*, or at farthest to the divine *nous*, without having any communication with the highest principle of all, or *the good*; and, indeed, upon this idea, Plotinus speaks of “the soul being attached to the *nous*, and “the *nous* to the *good* \*.” Agreeably to this also, Jamblichus speaks of the soul as “raised by *Theurgy*” (or certain magical operations) “above all matter, and united “to the eternal logos †.”

But this was not sufficient for the souls of these philosophers, which aspired higher than those of ordinary men. They thought that they might pass through the *intelligible world*, to the highest principle of all, and be united to *the good* itself. Thus Porphyry says concerning Plotinus, that “he “was wakeful, and had a pure soul, always “aspiring to the Deity, whom he entirely

\* *Ανεσθησεν τῷ νοῦ καὶ ἠρώησεν αὐτὸν.* En. 6. lib. 7. cap. 35. p. 731.

† *Ἐκείνη ἡ ψυχή ἐστὶν ἀπὸ παντὸς σώματος καὶ αἰσθησῶν ἀνεσθησμένη.* I. lect. 10. cap. 6. p. 177.

“loved;

“ loved; that he did his utmost to deliver  
 “ himself from the bitter waves of this  
 “ cruel life, and that thus, as this divine  
 “ person was raising himself in his thoughts  
 “ to the first and supreme God, in the me-  
 “ thod described in the *banquet of Plato*,  
 “ this God, without form or idea, and  
 “ placed above the *nous*, and every thing  
 “ intelligible, appeared to him; to which  
 “ God,” he adds, “ I, Porphyry, once ap-  
 “ proached, and was united, in the 68th  
 “ year of my age\*.”

The means by which this union with the Deity is effected, is explained by Proclus, as far as *mere words* can do it; but the meaning is, I own, above my comprehension. “ The soul,” he says, “ entering into  
 “ its own unity, beholds every thing, and

\* Εἰρήλαι δ' οἱ ἀγρυπνοί, καὶ καθαροὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχοντες, καὶ αἰετὸν σπουδῶν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον καὶ διὰ πάσης τῆς ψυχῆς ἡρώ, οἷ τε παύσῃ ἐποιεῖ, ἀπαλλαγῆναι πικρῶν κυμάτων, ἐξυπαλῶσαι, τὴν αἰμοσύνην τε καὶ βίαν. εἰς δὲ μάλα τὴν τῶν δαιμονίων φύσιν πολλὰς ἐναγοῖν ἐαυτὸν εἰς τὸν πρῶτον καὶ ἐπέκεινα θεῶν τὰς ἐνοίας, καὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐν τῷ συμπόσιῳ ἐφηγημένας ὁδούς τῶν πλάτωνι, ἐφάνη ἐκεῖνος ὁ μὴτε μορφὴν μὴ τε τινὰ ἰδέαν ἔχων, ὑπὲρ δὲ πάντων, καὶ πᾶσαν τὴν νοήσαν ἰδρυμένος. ὡς δὲ καὶ ἐγὼ ὁ πορφύριος ἀπαξ λέγω πηλίσσασθαι καὶ ἐνοθῆναι, εἰς ἀγῶν ἐξήκοστον τε καὶ οὐδοῶν. Plotini vita, ad finem.

“ God \*.” “ Again,” he says, “ It is the  
 “ faith of the gods that unites, in an un-  
 “ speakable manner, all the kinds of gods,  
 “ and demons, and happy souls to *the*  
 “ good †.”

Plotinus gives us a more particular account of this mysterious ascent of the soul to God in the following terms, from which some persons may possibly imagine, that they may derive some assistance in attaining to raptures of a similar nature. “ The know-  
 “ ledge, or contact of the good, he [Plato]  
 “ says is the greatest thing, and the greatest  
 “ discipline; not meaning that the intui-  
 “ tion of the good itself is the discipline,  
 “ but something to be learned by it. To  
 “ this we are led by analogies, negations,  
 “ the knowledge of external things, and  
 “ certain gradations. For it must be pre-  
 “ ceded by purgations, prayers” [supposed  
 to be understood] “ virtues and ornaments

\* Εἰς ἑαυτὴν ἠσπασατο τὴν ψυχὴν, τὰ πᾶσι πάντα κἀνψύχῳ.  
 ὁ δὲ θεὸς. In Platonem, lib. 1. cap. 3. p. 7.

† Ὁμοίᾳ τὸ ὅλον ἴππευ τὰς θεῶν πρὸς τὸν ἡ ἀγαθὸν ἀ-  
 γὰρ: ἠσπασατο τὰ θεῶν ἡμῶν σωματικῶν, ἢ ἑαυτοῦ. ἢ ψυχῶν τὰς  
 ἠσπασατο. Ibid. lib. 1. cap. 25. p. 61.

“ of

“ of the mind, the ascent to the intelligible  
 “ world, fixing there, and laying hold of  
 “ the things that are there. Whosoever  
 “ becomes at the same time a spectator and  
 “ a spectacle, of himself and other things,  
 “ and becoming *essence* and *nous*, and the  
 “ universal living thing, no longer sees any  
 “ thing from without, but being himself  
 “ that thing, that is, the intelligible world,  
 “ or part of it, he is near to it, and within  
 “ one stage of it” [that is, the good itself]  
 “ then shining with every thing that is in-  
 “ telligible. Then laying aside all disci-  
 “ pline, as the rudiments of a school, and  
 “ being fixed in the beautiful, he knows  
 “ whither he is advanced. And being  
 “ borne thence by the *nous* itself, as by a  
 “ wave, and carried aloft by it, as it were  
 “ swelling, he gains the sudden intuition.  
 “ Not seeing *how*, but the sight filling his  
 “ eyes with light, he sees nothing but it,  
 “ the light itself being the vision \*.”

\* Εστὶ μὲν ἀγαθὸν εἶπε γνώσις εἶπε ἐπαφή, μέγιστον, καὶ μέγιστον φησι  
 τὸ εἶναι μαθημα, καὶ τὸ πρὸς αὐτὸ ἰδεῖν μαθημα λέγων, ἀλλὰ περὶ αὐτὸ  
 μαθεῖν τι πρότερον, διδάσκουσι μὲν ἐν ἀναλογίαι τε καὶ ἀφαιρέσεις, καὶ  
 γνώσεις τῶν ἐξ αὐτῆ, καὶ ἀναβάσται τινες. πορεύουσι δὲ καθαρῶς πρὸς  
 αὐτὸ καὶ ἀρεταὶ καὶ κοσμησεις, καὶ τὰ νοητὰ ἐπιβάσεις, καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆ ἰδρύσεις,



As it may be supposed that the learned commentator of Plotinus, viz. Marfilius Ficinus, well understood this sublime part of Platonism, and may explain it better, I shall give his comment upon it. “ The  
 “ ladder by which we ascend to the *prin-*  
 “ *ciple* has seven steps. The first is, the  
 “ purgation of the mind ; the second, the  
 “ knowledge of the divine works particu-  
 “ larly provided ; the third, the contem-  
 “ plation of the order by which the infe-  
 “ rior works are gradually brought to the  
 “ superior ; the fourth, a certain propor-  
 “ tionable comparison, bringing it from this  
 “ order to that which is divine ; the fifth,  
 “ is negation, by which you separate all  
 “ that you conceive from the principle ;  
 “ the sixth, is earnest prayer to God, that the

κὶ τῶν εἰσεῖ ἐπιστάσεις . ὅς τις γενήται ὁμοῦ θεότης τε κὶ θεῶμα αὐτὸς αὐτῷ  
 κὶ τῶν ἀλλῶν, κὶ γενομένος ὡσια, κὶ νῆς, κὶ ζῶντων παύλετες, μηκέτι ἐξωθεν  
 αὐτὸ βλεπτοί . τῆλο δὲ γενομένος, ἐγγυς ἐστὶ, κὶ τὸ ἐφεξῆς εἰνεῖν κὶ πληροῖσιν,  
 αὐτὸ ἢ ἢ ἐπὶ πᾶσι τῶ νοήτω ἐπιστάσιν . εἴθε δὴ εἰσᾶς τις πᾶν μαθημα,  
 κὶ μέχρι τῆ παιδαγωγῆ θείας, καὶ ἐν καλῶ ἰδρυθείς, ἐν ὧ μὲν ἐστὶ μέχρι  
 τῆς νῆς . ἐξενεχθείς δὲ τῶ αὐτῶ τῆ νῆ οἶον κυμαίνῃ, καὶ ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς οἶον  
 οἰδησαντὸς ἀρθεῖς εἰσείδεν ἐξαίφνης . καὶ ἰδὼν ὡπως, ἀλλ’ ἡ θεὰ πληροῖσασα  
 φῶς τὰ οὐμάλα, καὶ δ’ αὐτῆς ποιοῖται ἄλλο ὄραν, ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ τὸ φῶς τὸ  
 ὄραμα ἦν . Plotini En. 6. lib. 7. cap. 36. p. 727.

“ Father

“ Father of the intellectual world himself  
 “ may truly make you the intellectual world,  
 “ being virtually this world from the be-  
 “ ginning; the seventh, that when you are  
 “ become the intellectual world, being car-  
 “ ried farther by the love of *the good*, you  
 “ may be transformed from the intellectual  
 “ state to *the good*, which is above in-  
 “ tellect\*.”

Jamblichus follows Plotinus, and agrees with him in his account of this mystical union of the soul to God. Considering how far the actions of the soul in these divine extasies are voluntary, he says, “ This di-

\* Scala per quam ascenditur ad principium, septem gradus habet: primus est purgatio animi: secundus, cognitio operum divinorum singulatim comparata: tertius contemplatio ordinis, quo opera inferiora reducuntur ad superiora gradatim: quartus, comparatio quædam proportionalis ex ordine hujusmodi ad divinum ordinem sese conferens: quintus, negatio per quam cuncta quæ concipis separe a principio: sextus, supplex ad Deum oratio, ut ipse intellectualis mundi pater te reddat mundum intellectualem actu: ens enim potentia mundus hic ab initio: septimus, ut quum ipse intellectualis mundus evaseris, ulterius amore boni concitus, ex statu intellectuali transformeris in bonum superius intellectu. Plotini. En. 6: lib. 7. p. 727.

“ vine

“ vine irradiation, which comes by prayers,  
 “ shines and operates voluntarily, and is far  
 “ from any thing of violence. But, by a  
 “ divine energy and perfection, as much ex-  
 “ cels all voluntary motion, as the divine  
 “ will of *the good* excels all animal voli-  
 “ tion. By such volition the gods, being  
 “ gracious and merciful, infuse abundant  
 “ light on those who are engaged in their  
 “ gic exercises, calling their souls to them,  
 “ and giving them an union with them-  
 “ selves; accustoming them, even when  
 “ they are in the body, to be separate from  
 “ the body, and to be carried to their eter-  
 “ nal and intelligible principle. What I  
 “ say appears from facts to be the safety of  
 “ the soul. For in seeing these happy vi-  
 “ sions, the soul changes its animal life, and  
 “ acts with another energy; and seeing  
 “ things in their true light, he no longer  
 “ considers himself as a man. For after  
 “ quitting his proper life, he becomes pos-  
 “ sessed of the most happy energy of the  
 “ gods\*.”

\* Αυτοφάνης γὰρ τις ἐστὶ καὶ αὐτοτέλης, ἢ διὰ τῶν κλήσεων  
 ἐλλαμπῆς, ὡρῶν τε τε καθελεσθαι ἀφ᾽ ἐσθῆς, διὰ τῆς θείας  
 τε ἐνεργείας καὶ τελειότητος προεῖσιν εἰς τὸ ἐμφανῆ, καὶ τοσοῦτα  
 προεχῆι

Plato himself is always referred to, as having taught this method of the ascent of the soul to God, or the chief good. But though what he has said on the subject may have led to this mysterious business, it falls far short of it. Treating of *beauty*, in his dialogue intitled *The Banquet*, he says, we may pass from particular beautiful objects in nature to *beauty in the abstract*, and this he describes as the same thing with *good* in the abstract, or the first principle of all things, in the contemplation of which consists the highest happiness of man. Having described this progress at large, he says, in M. Sydenham's translation,

προεχει της εκυτις κηησιως, οσον η ταγαδη θεια βυλησις της προαιρητικης υπερχει ζωης. δια της τοιαυτης εν βυλησιως, αφοδως οι θεοι το φως επιλαμπουσιν, ευμυεις οντες και ιλιω, τοις θεουργοις, τας τε ψυχας αυτων εις θαυτος ανακαλεμενοι, και την ενωσιν αυταις της προς εαυτους χορηγοντες, εδιζουσις τε ουτας και επι εν σωματι κωσις αφισαθαι των σωματων, επι τε της ειδιος και γοητης αυτων αρχην περιεχουσθαι.— Διολοι δε και απ' αυτων των ενωτων ο νυχι θαμεν ειπαι της ψυχης ζωηριος. εν γαρ τω θεουργω τα μακαρια διαματα, η ψυχη αλλη: ζωη αλλαττειται, και στερον ενεργειαν ενεργει, και οδ' ανθρωπος ειπαι ηγαιται, το τειφδως ηγαιμεν: πολλας και οδ' ενι της εαυτης αφισα ζωης, της μακαριωτατης των θεων ενωσις ηλλοξαιτο. Jamb. de Myster. sed. 1. cap. 12. p. 21.

“ Here

“ Here is to be found, if any where, the  
“ happy life, the ultimate object of desire  
“ to man. It is to live for ever in behold-  
“ ing this consummate beauty, the sight of  
“ which, if ever you attain it, will appear  
“ not to be in gold, nor in magnificent at-  
“ tire, nor in beautiful youths or damsels.  
“ With such, however, at present, many of  
“ you are so intirely taken up, and with the  
“ sight of them so absolutely charmed, that  
“ you would rejoice to spend your whole  
“ lives, were it possible, in the presence of  
“ those enchanting objects, without any  
“ thoughts of eating or drinking, but  
“ feasting your eyes only with their beauty,  
“ and living always in the bare sight of it.  
“ If this be so, what effect, think you,  
“ would the sight of *beauty itself* have upon  
“ a man, were he to see it pure and genuine,  
“ not corrupted and stained all over with  
“ the mixture of flesh and colours, and  
“ much more of like perishing and fading  
“ trash ; but were able to view that divine  
“ essence, *the beautiful itself*, in its own sim-  
“ plicity of form. Think you that the life  
“ of such a man would be contemptible or  
“ mean ;

“ mean ; of the man who always directed  
 “ his eye towards the right object, who  
 “ looked always at real beauty, and was con-  
 “ versant with it continually. Perceive you  
 “ not that, in beholding the beautiful, with  
 “ that eye with which alone it is possible to  
 “ behold it, thus and thus only could a man  
 “ ever attain to generate not the images or  
 “ semblance of virtue, as not having his in-  
 “ timate commerce with an image, or a  
 “ semblance, but virtue true, real, and sub-  
 “ stantial, from the converse and embraces  
 “ of that which is real and true. Thus be-  
 “ getting true virtue, and bringing her up  
 “ till she is grown mature, he would be-  
 “ come a favourite of the gods, and at  
 “ length would be, if any man ever be,  
 “ himself one of the immortals \*.” Those

\* Ενταυθα τε βίη, ω φίλε Σωκράτες (εφη η Μαντινική ξένη) επειερ  
 παε αλλοδι, βίωλον ανθρωπω, θεωμενω αυλο το καλον. ο εαν παε ιδης, κ  
 καλα χρυσον τε κ η εσθηλα, κ τες καλης παυδας τε κ νεανισκυς δοξει σκι  
 ειναι. κς νυ ορων εππεπληξαι, κ ελομος ει κ συ, κ αλλοι πολλοι ορωντες  
 τα παυδικα, κ ξυνοντες αει αυλοισ, επειως οιοσι ην μητε εσθειν, μητε πινειν,  
 αλλα θεασθαι μονον κ ξυνειναι. τι δη τα (εφη) οιομεδα, ειλω γενολο  
 αυλο το καλον ιδειν ειλικρινες, καθαρον, αμμιλον, αλλα μη αναπλευν  
 σαρκων τε ανθρωπων κ χρωματων, κ αλλης πολλης φασαριας δητης,  
 αλλ αυλο το θειου, καλον δυναλο μονειδες καλιδειν \* αρ οει (εφη) φαυλοσ  
 βιον γυγεσθαι εκεισε βλεπτιλος ανθρωπος, κ εκεινο ο δει θεωμενω, κ ξυ-  
 πολος

who can admire these things, should not complain of Jacob Behmen.

This wild enthusiastic notion of an union to God, to be obtained by contemplation, austerity, and a particular discipline, was eagerly embraced by many speculating christians, and contributed greatly to that turn for mysticism, which infected such great numbers in former times, and which infects many even to this day. It likewise contributed to that fondness for solitude, and abstraction from the world, which gave rise to the establishment of hermits and monks. The language of many christians has been much the same with the following of Jamblichus, who describes “ a two-fold state of man, one in “ which we are all soul, and being out of “ the body, are raised aloft, and dwell with “ the universal and immaterial gods; and “ another state in which we are bound by “ the shell of the body, so as to be confined

νοῦς αὐτῶ · ἢ ἐκ ἐνδυμῆ (εἴη) οἷ ἐνλαυδα αὐτῶ μοναχῶ γενεσῆσαι, ορατῆ  
ω ορατῶν το καλῶν, τιθεῖν ἐκ εἰδῶλα ἀρετῆς, αἰε ἐκ εἰδῶλα εἰραπτομενω,  
αλλ' ἀληθῆ, αἰε τῶ ἀληθῆς εἰραπτομενω · τεκόντι δὲ ἀρετῆν ἀληθῆ, καὶ θρε-  
ψαμενω, υπαρχεῖ θεοφιλεῖ γενεσῆσαι, καὶ, εἰπερ τῶ ἀλλῶ ἀνδρωπῶ, ἀδα-  
ναλῶ καὶ ἐκεινω. Convivium, p. 331. Ed. Gen.

“ by

“ by matter and to be, as it were, wholly  
“ corporeal \*.”

Clemens Alexandrinus says, after Plato, that he who contemplates ideas, will live as a God among men, that *nous* is the place of ideas, and is God †.

If this account of the doctrine of the Platonists, with respect to God and nature, does not give my readers complete satisfaction, it will not be in my power to do it. The passages which I have selected from Plotinus, and others, dark as they may appear, are really some of the clearest in all their writings, the bulk of which may well be denominated *darkness that may be felt*. The writings of the schoolmen, which have been so much ridiculed, on account of their obscurity, and idle distinctions, are day-light compared to those of these Pla-

\* ΣΚΕΨΟΜΕΘΑ δη το μελα τειλο συμφωνως τοις προειρημενοις, κ' την ημετεραν διπλην κατασασιν. οτε μεν γαρ ολη ψυχη γινομεθα, κ' εσμεν εξω τε σωματι, μελεωροι τε των μεθ' ολων των αυλων θεων μελεωροπολαμεν. οτι δ' αυ δεδεμεθα εν τω σφρωδει σωματι, κ' απο της υλης κατεχομεθα, κ' εσμεν σωματιοειδεις. Sect. 5. cap. 15. p. 130.

† Εικολως εν και Πλατων του των ιδεων θεορητικον θεον εν ανθρωποις ζησεσθαι φησι. νης δε χωρα ιδεων. νης δε ο θεος. Strom. lib. 4.



tonists: I only desire any man of tolerable sense, who has a competent knowledge of the Greek language, and who may be disposed to think there is too much severity in this censure, to spend a single day upon Plotinus, Jamblichus, or Proclus. If he leave them without having his own mind very much beclouded (of which there is some danger) I am confident that he will agree with me in my opinion concerning them.

In passing this censure on the writings of these Platonists, I am far from wishing to suggest a low opinion of the understandings of the *men*. I believe, that with respect to their intellectual powers, they were equal to any metaphysicians of the present age, or of any other; and so certainly was Thomas Aquinas, and many of the schoolmen. But mankind had not then attained to the first elements of metaphysical knowledge, which is now indeed in a very imperfect state, much behind many other branches of knowledge; and what poor work would Newton himself have made, if he had been set to read before he had learned